Table of Contents

1. Allegiances
2. Prologue
3. Chapter 1
4. Chapter 2
5. Chapter 3
6. Chapter 4
7. Chapter 5
8. Chapter 6
9. Chapter 7
10. Chapter 8
11. Chapter 9
12. Chapter 10
13. Chapter 11
14. Chapter 12
15. Chapter 13
16. Chapter 14
17. Chapter 15
18. Chapter 16
19. Chapter 17
20. Chapter 18
21. Chapter 19
22. Chapter 20
23. Chapter 21
24. Chapter 22
25. Chapter 23
26. Chapter 24
27. Chapter 25
28. Chapter 26
29. Chapter 27
30. Chapter 28
31. Chapter 29
32. Chapter 30
33. Chapter 31
34. Chapter 32

35. Chapter 33
36. Chapter 34
37. Chapter 35
38. Chapter 36
39. Chapter 37
40. Chapter 38
41. Chapter 39
42. Chapter 40
43. Epilogue
44. Trivia
45. Book #4

Allegiances

(A/N: This is the third book in the Uprising series by me! If you have not read Warriors: Retribution, I suggest you do that!)

Vertexclan

Leader

Skystar- A tall, grey tom with a white belly and blue eyes.

Deputy

Buzzardgaze- A big, lanky tom. His fur is grey and tawny with a spotted tabby pattern. He has a round face with oval hazel eyes.

Medicine Cats

Nova- A short, lithe she-cat with narrow blue-violet eyes. Her fur is night black, with white heart-shaped patches.

Marigoldfur- a golden-furred she-cat with blue eyes

Warriors

Lionstrike- a cream and fawn tom with green eyes

Rainpad- a white-furred tom with grey paws

Lightningblaze- a white-furred tom with black paws

Scorchwatcher- A smoky black-furred she-cat with orange eyes

Cloudthorn- a deep yellow mackerel tabby she-cat with green eyes

Crownight- a white she-cat with black tortoiseshell patches

Stagwhisper- a short, grey tom

Rockcreek- a tall, ginger tabby tom

Smokedream- a bright ginger classic tabby she-cat

Queens

Emberfoot- a grey she-cat with grey eyes (mother to **Breezekit**, a small and plump she-cat with pale cream fur and dark orange eyes, **Sunkit**, a vibrant ginger furred she-cat with a white face and a white mark on her forehead, she has golden eyes, and **Jumpkit**, a small, stocky she-cat, her fur is yellow and brown with a rosetted tabby pattern, with white patches, she has large blue eyes.) (Mate: Lightningblaze)

Driftclan

Leader

Featherstar- Her fur is blue gray with a spotted tabby pattern, she has light green eyes.

Deputy

Sandcoat- His fur is cream and grey with a classic tabby pattern, with a white chest. He has narrow hazel eyes.

Medicine Cat

Thistlewhisper- White fluffy she-cat with tufted white ears and small paws, her eyes are light-green

Warriors

Mistfall- a tawny and grey tom with a spotted tabby pattern and has orange-red eyes

Hollowcreek- a small brown and golden-furred she-cat with jade eyes

Sagethorn- A large, muscular she-cat. Her fur is white, with night-black patches. She has violet eyes.

Lionsplash- A golden tabby she-cat with a splash of white on her chest, she has soft green eyes and short fur.

Gullstalk- A small white tom with black markings, a short bobbed black tail, he has one torn ear and amber eyes

Rushstreak- A dark ginger she-cat, she has bright yellow eyes, a light muzzle belly and paws, and markings that look like streaks running along her sides.

Eagleswoop- His fur is dark cream, with a white patch on chest and a white chest. It is silky and of medium length. He has a circular face with large blue eyes.

Hailpad- White fluffy tom with tufted white ears and small paws, his eyes are a light yellow

Queens

Ripplewave- a white-furred she-cat with light brown eyes (mother to **Wavekit**, a cream and white-furred tom with light brown eyes, **Kingletkit**, a short, light-brown-furred tom with a dark brown tail and paws. He has a stripe on his back; he has green eyes, **Frogkit**, a massive she-cat, her fur is white with silver patches, she has oval hazel eyes, **Drizzlekit**, a white and cream furred she-cat with green eyes, **Avalanchekit**, a brown-furred tom with white markings, and **Adderkit**, a brown- and yellow-furred she-cat with blind jade eyes.) (Mate: Lionstrike?)

Fang- A black she-cat with two grey front paws. She has burgundy eyes. (mother to **Morningkit**, a fluffy grey-furred she-cat with golden eyes, and **Shadowkit**, a black-furred tom with dark periwinkle eyes.) (Mate: Mistfall)

Eclipse- A black she-cat with violet-blue eyes

Elders

Eelspeck- A dark grey tom with darker specks, his eyes are a dark green and he has tufted ears and long whiskers

Stormfish- A silver-blue tom, he has short fur and his tail is a

lighter blue silver than his body, his eyes are a deep blue

Cats outside of the Clans

Shredflash- A grey tom with a scarred pelt, he also has black socks and a black ear. He has maroon eyes and a scar through his left eye.

Prologue

In a starry lit area with many trees and bushes full of stars, there were voices in the distance. "Shredflash isn't what?!" one voice yelled.

"It's true... He should be dead, but it turns out my son didn't do enough..." another voice replied. It was Blizzardfluff, a past warrior of Driftclan who padded up to the tom.

The tom sighed. "What are we going to do now? Both clans are in danger once more, and it's just from one cat!"

"So *now* you're worried about the clans, Foxstar? Interesting." a third voice meowed.

Foxstar sighed as he turned to see who it was. "Hello, Thorntail."

"Hey, Thorntail!" another meow came from beside Blizzardfluff.

"Didn't think you were here either, Otterpelt..." Foxstar sighed once more.

"It's Starclan, Foxstar, we're all dead." Thorntail shot back.

"No need to argue."

"Shellstar!" Blizzardfluff and Otterpelt both mewed in unison.

"Hello... Shellstar." the old Vertexclan leader heaved another sigh.

"Hi, Foxstar. There's a prophecy that we need to get through to the clans, but I do not know who to give the prophecy to." Shellstar meowed, lashing his tail.

"How about one kit?" Thorntail suggested.

"What about Thistlewhisper? She'll know what to do!" Otterpelt added.

"No, not the kits, and Thistlewhisper might get overwhelmed by this one..."

Blizzardfluff then stepped forward. "We'll tell Mistfall." she meowed. "He'll be able to figure it out!" she gave an enormous smile.

"Great idea!" Shellstar meowed back. "Any objections?" he looked around at the cats with him.

Every cat nodded, except Foxstar. Who seemed unsure of the idea.

"Foxstar?" the past Driftclan leader mewed.

Every cat then looked at him, waiting for a response.

"Fine," Foxstar meowed after a few heartbeats. "Let's get this over with."

*

"Shredflash, you seem cold!"

"You think so, Shred? There's definitely not snow everywhere I look.." I replied to the eyeless tom that padded next to me.

"What? I'm just saying!" he mewed back.

Y'know, it was better when you were just in my head all the time... I thought to myself.

"I can still hear your thoughts too, Shredflash!" he yelled.

"Right..." I meowed, continuing to trudge through the fluffy snow under my paws. For my first leaf-bare, I didn't think it would be this cold!

As I continued my way through the trees that the snowflakes seemed to lie upon, my belly growled.

I haven't eaten in a while. Prey is more scarce now.

"You should try to catch something. You can't die now! You have two clans to get back at!" Shred mewed to me.

He wasn't wrong. I can't die from hunger. So I stopped and listened out for any prey I could hear around me.

That didn't go well, it was just silent.

So instead, I continued padding forward, looking and sniffing for any signs of nearby prey.

"Find anything?"

"No, please be quiet."

"Okay!"

While Shred may guide me through all of this, he can still be annoying.

After a while of not finding anything, my stomach growled once more. This time, it felt painful. I winced as it made noises. It was begging for food at this point.

"Shredflash, you need to find food *now*." Shred said to me.

"What do you think I'm trying to do?" I shot back and glared at the grey tom.

Shred said nothing. He only gave me a blank look. I continued my way on though, feeling slow and dizzy. I have to keep going. I'm not dying from hunger, let alone in the snow itself. After a while, I stopped. I didn't want to move, as my stomach felt like it wanted to murder me. I probably deserve this... No, I don't. I fell over onto my side, feeling the freezing snow sink into my fur. My vision became blurry. My clan drove me away, Driftclan took my kin away from me, and now I lie here, in the snow, waiting for death to take me.

As I closed my eyes, thinking this was the end for me, Shredflash, killer of many cats.

I saw a figure of something, or maybe even some cat, before I shut my eyes.

"Hurry and open your eyes. I have food for you!"

Chapter 1

Skystar awoke with a jolt as he looked around to see that he was still in his den. "Why do I keep having weird dreams involving Shredflash? He won't be able to come back for me... He's dead..." Skystar meowed and stretched himself out. He then shivered as he finished stretching. *Leaf-bare came early this time around, huh?* He thought and padded out of his den to see and feel the chilly snow below his paws. *It's like the snow has taken over my clan!* the Vertexclan leader thought and looked around to see if any other clanmates were out and about. A familiar tom padded up from the left side of Skystar. It was the Vertexclan deputy, Buzzardgaze. *It's always so nice seeing Buzzardgaze around, he's great to talk to!* Skystar blushed as Buzzardgaze stopped next to him. The leader turned to face his deputy. "Leaf-bare is so much colder than I remember! Don't you agree, Skystar?"

Skystar nodded, "I agree, but the last time leaf-bare was around, we were just apprentices!"

"That's when Foxstar was around, good times!" Buzzardgaze purred.

"Yep, and before the whole Shredflash incident happened..." Skystar lowered his ears. The thought of Shredflash made him angered.

Buzzardgaze sighed. "It wasn't too long ago when he got Shellstar. I just don't want you to get hurt. Or even worse..." he paused, lowering his head.

"Lift your head, Buzzardgaze." the Vertexclan leader started.

The deputy looked into Skystar's eyes.

"Nothing will happen to me. Not only will I protect myself, but I trust my clan will be by my side," Skystar meowed.

"And we will, Skystar! You're an amazing leader, and I'm happy to be your deputy!" Buzzardgaze meowed back and purred.

Skystar blushed at Buzzardgaze's statement. "Thank you!" he meowed.

"Anytime, now, is there anything you need me to do?" the Vertexclan deputy asked.

"Yes, gather up two other cats and try to hunt for prey. We may seem to have enough for now, but leaf-bare will be here for a long while. So try to catch as much as you three can." he ordered.

"Will do!" Buzzardgaze meowed back, smiling at Skystar, before turning around and padding off to find cats that will go with him out onto the snowy Vertexclan territory.

Skystar sighed. *I wish Buzzardgaze was my mate sometimes. It may sound insane, but he's just so great! That Smokedream is a lucky cat.*. He thought and shivered at the chilly breeze that hit him, before going back into his den.

*

I want Ripplewave. She's all I can think about, only her, just her. This is pains me so much, I don't know what to do. I've been laying in my nest in the Warriors' den for what feels like four moons now.

And all I've thought about is Ripplewave.

"Lionstrike, are you in here?" I recognized the voice of Buzzardgaze as he entered the den. I looked up to see his hazel eyes stare down at me. "There you are!" he meowed.

What could he possibly want with me?

"You're coming to hunt with me!"

I groaned. I didn't want to leave the den. "Do I have to?"

"Skystar's orders!"

I gave another loud groan as I got up from my comfy nest, stretching my body out. I didn't want to hunt; I wanted Ripplewave.

"Come on, it'll be fun!"

"Can I come with you two?" I turned to see Lightningblaze get up from his nest. The tom who had a litter with my sister.

Do I care? Not really, it's her decision. Nothing to do with me. One of them acts like me though, and that's-

"Let's go you two!" Buzzardgaze cut off my thought and left the warriors' den.

Lightningblaze followed the deputy out of the den. I sighed as I followed the two other toms. Once I came outside, I felt the cold air hit my pelt, and I gave a shiver.

Cold, just like how Ripplewave left me.

I watched as the snowflakes fell from the sky while we padded out of Vertexclan camp.

I would get Ripplewave back, even if it is the last thing Ido.

*

Marigoldfur woke up. She was standing by the Ocean Side. It was full of stars. *Why am I here?* The medicine cat thought as she looked around. She stopped her head as she saw the figures of what seemed to be two other cats. They were doing certain movements that she couldn't recognize completely. A few heartbeats later, it clicked in her head. *They're training! But what does this mean...?* Marigoldfur watched as a third cat padded up to the two. The Vertexclan medicine cat couldn't identify them at all until the third cat opened their eyes. They flashed red as they attacked one of the other cats. *Oh, no...* Marigoldfur thought, and ran over towards the three cats. "Hey!" was the only thing she meowed before everything went dark.

Marigoldfur... Marigoldfur? Marigoldfur!

Marigoldfur snapped awake to the sound of Nova's mew. "H-Huh?" She glanced around. She was back in the medicine den in her nest.

"You seemed like you were having a bad dream, is everything alright?" Nova asked.

"No... It was something else, Nova.." she meowed back.

"What do you mean?"

"It was a vision."

Chapter 2

I didn't think being leader would be so complicated! Especially during the winter... It overwhelms me sometimes when I think about it. Featherstar, the leader of Driftclan. The name doesn't have much of a ring to it... Featherstar, the greatest Driftclan leader! No.. Definitely not that.. Shellstar was a far greater leader than I. I miss him so much. Why did he have to go so soon? Why did that no good Shredflash attack him? He's attacked Driftclan so much over the moons, and I'm glad he's gone! At least I will not lose another clanmate because of him.. He killed Icejaw, Blizzardfluff, and now Shellstar.. I growled to myself at the thought of Shredflash attacking him. I should've stayed with him. Why didn't I? I laid my head onto my paws and sighed.

Am I even fit to be the leader of Driftclan?

No, I can't think like that... I have to stay strong for Shellstar and keep going. I will do my best to lead my clan through this leaf-bare! I got up from my nest and padded out of my den and then... Shivered.

It's freezing out here.

It's leaf-bare.

Forgot about that part.

I looked around the camp. Where there would usually be few spots of sand on the ground, there were patches of snow there in its place.

Then again, there's snow everywhere, for Starclan's sake!

I sighed and turned to head back into my den. I do not understand why I was out here in the first place!

"Hey, Featherstar." I heard a mew behind me.

I turned to see the Driftclan deputy, Sandcoat. "Hello!" I meowed back, "What's up?"

What's up? I'm so formal... I thought.

"Just wanted to tell you that the Ocean has frozen over completely, there's no chance of catching fish at all until leaf-bare is over." Sandcoat told me.

"As expected..." I replied with a sigh. "Well, thanks for checking. How are we doing on prey?"

"No problem, and the fresh-kill pile seems to be full. We won't be needing to hunt for a while."

"Good to know. You may rest now if you wish." I meowed.

Sandcoat nodded and turned around. But before he padded off, I stopped him. "And Sandcoat," I said to the tom.

"Hm?" he turned around to face me.

"You're doing a magnificent job!"

The cream-furred tom smiled. "Thank you, Featherstar." he meowed back to me, and padded back to the warriors' den.

I smiled and headed to the medicine den. *I'm glad I chose Sandcoat as my deputy! He's an excellent cat!* I thought as I padded inside to see Thistlewhisper staring down at the herbs in front of her. It didn't seem like she was sorting them at all. Though it may seem like medicine cats only sort herbs, they do more than that. They heal the clan and make sure every cat is well. I'm glad I can have a great medicine cat as well! Thistlewhisper turned to look at me. "Oh, hello Featherstar!" she meowed, then smiled.

"Hello, Thistlewhisper. Is everything okay in here?" I meowed to the medicine cat.

"Yeah! I'm just looking at what herbs I must look for before the snow gets rid of it all! I don't want cats getting sick and I can't heal them!"

"We wouldn't want that, now would we?" I mewed back.

"Nope!" Thistlewhisper said.

"Have you thought about taking in an apprentice?" I suggested.

"I have! But I have no clue if any of the kits are interested in being a medicine cat!" she replied, now with a worried look.

"I'm sure one will think about it soon!"

I hope.

"Yeah, me too!"

Even if Thistlewhisper got an apprentice, she's still a young she-cat. So she has a long life to live. "Well, I'll be heading back to my den now."

"Okay! See you later, Featherstar!" she meowed with a smile.

I smiled back as I left her den and padded back towards mine.

I'll make sure nothing happens to any of my clan. I thought. *I will not let Shellstar down!*

Driftclan will overcome Shredflash.

*

Mistfall saw Featherstar pad back into her den. She came out of the medicine den not too long ago, but Mistfall was heading to the Nursery to check on his mate and kits. He padded in to see some of Ripplewave's kits playing with Morningkit. Ripplewave looked up at his brother. "Hey, Mistfall!" she meowed happily.

"Hey, Ripplewave!" he smiled and meowed back.

"Mistfall! Mistfall! Mistfall!" It was Morningkit who ran up to her father and hopped around excitedly. She enjoyed seeing Mistfall.

"Hi, my sweet Morningkit!" He nuzzled her, and she nuzzled him back. "What are you up to?"

"Playing with Frogkit and Wavekit! We were pouncing on each other like proper warriors!" the grey-furred she-cat mewed.

Mistfall purred. "Where's your brother?"

"Right over here." Mistfall looked over to Fang once she meowed that to him. A black-furred tom was curled up against her. It was his son, Shadowkit.

He was sleeping.

Morningkit trotted over to her brother and prodded him. "Wake up! Mistfall is in here!"

Shadowkit glared at his sister. "I was sleeping, fish-brain! Leave me alone!" he growled.

"Aw, come on, Shadowkit! You can't sleep all day!" Morningkit replied.

"I can and will." the black-furred kit put his head back down.

"Shadowkit, go say hi to Mistfall." Fang meowed.

Shadowkit gave a loud groan as he got up and stormed over to Mistfall. "Hey." his mew was stern.

"And what are you up to, my great Shadowkit?"

"Sleeping."

"Is that it?"

"Yep, and I'm going back to doing that."

"Huh-"

Shadowkit turned around and padded back over to Fang.

"I'm taking you two to the Ocean Side!" Mistfall yelled.

Shadowkit turned around and hissed in annoyance.

"Yay!" Morningkit hopped around in excitement and then looked at her mother. "Can we go, Fang?"

"Sure."

Morningkit squealed. Shadowkit sighed.

"Can we go to too, Ripplewave?" Kingletkit asked.

"Not today, maybe another time!" the she-cat responded, and licked his head.

"Come on then, you two!" Mistfall happily meowed as he padded out of the Nursery, his two kits following him.

*

"Woah! The water looks so pretty!"

"That's all ice, Morningkit, it turns into water after leaf-bare!" Mistfall replied.

"It's not that pretty..." Shadowkit scoffed.

"Shadowkit... You can't be gloomy and angry all the time!" Mistfall turned his head to the side, "You have to lighten-" He paused.

Mistfall's eyes widened as he stared.

Shredflash... Mistfall's wide smile turned into an angered look.

"It's cold... Can we go back now, Mistfall?" Shadowkit mewed. "Mistfall?" he looked at his father and then followed his gaze.

Mistfall hissed at what seemed to be Shredflash. "You're supposed to be dead!"

Morningkit followed her father's gaze. "Who? Who's there?"

Mistfall shut his eyes.

"*Stay away from my family!*"

"There's no cat there!" Shadowkit yelled at Mistfall.

The tawny and grey-tom opened his eyes. Shredflash had disappeared.

"Mistfall..." He looked down to see a worried look on Morningkit's face.

"L-Let's go..." Mistfall's mew shook as he padded through the mixture of snow and sand back to his clan. His kits right on his tail.

Chapter 3

"Who's there...?" I asked as I felt something warm and fuzzy touch my nose. I sniffed it.

Food.

"Better hurry and eat that nice squirrel up, Shredflash!" I could hear Shred say near me.

Yeah, yeah... I'm getting to that! I thought to myself. I knew he could hear my thoughts still, so there was no point in trying to talk to him with another cat in front of me! So with the bit of strength I had left in me, I took a significant bite out of the piece of juicy prey and chewed. "There you go." I heard the cat meow to me.

I looked up with my left eye closed. I couldn't open it.

Honestly, I'm okay with that. I think I was losing sight in that eye, anyway...

My right eye widened as I saw a silver-furred she-cat stare down at me, her violet eyes shining as the snowflakes fell past her muzzle. I quickly sat up as I realized I was still laying on my side. "You didn't have to save me."

"I couldn't just leave you there to die! That would be cruel of me.." she meowed.

I took another large bite out of the squirrel. "I was doing fine on my own."

"You nearly died of starvation!" she yelled.

"You did nearly die of starvation there, Shredflash." Shred mewed.

Please shut up. I thought.

"You may be right, but how did you even see me?" I meowed.

"Well, I was hunting for myself until I came across another cat laying in the snow. And that cat was you, whatever your name is!"

"It's Shredflash."

"So you're a clan cat? That's neat! My name's Aurora!" she meowed, smiling.

I ate some more of the squirrel. It was plump. "With a name like that, how could you possibly know about the clans?" I said.

"I'm a member of Galaxyclan! Or used to be... Before we all disbanded.. I can take you to the old camp if you'd like! You can even stay with me, it'll be great!" Aurora seemed excited about that idea.

"Let me think about it for a second," I meowed back.

"Shredflash, go with her." Shred quickly told me before I could think of anything.

Why?

"This is your only chance to live on and get back at the clans!"

You have a point...

"I can even help you take control of her, she'll do anything you ask. You just have to be threatening," Shred meowed.

Okay.

After I finished eating the prey, I got up onto my paws and looked at Aurora. "I'll go with you." I said.

"Great! Come on then, I'll show you the Galaxyclan camp!" Aurora then started running off in a different direction. I chased after the silver she-cat, our paws leaving tracks in the cold snow as she led me to this unfamiliar territory.

*

"Here we are!" Aurora suddenly stopped as two tall pine trees littered with snow were in front of us.

"So.. Are these trees the camp? Do we have to climb up or-"

Aurora cut me off and giggled. "No, silly! Follow me!" she padded past the trees and I followed her into an open area. There were some dens placed around the area and some giant things. I couldn't tell what they were since I have never seen them before.

"This is the Galaxyclan camp?" I asked.

"Yep! Maybe once the snow melts, you'll be able to see everything! If you stay long enough..." she frowned once she had said that.

"Don't worry, Aurora! We will stay!" Shred yelled.

I glared at Shred and hissed. "Didn't I tell you to shut up?!"

I realized only I could see the eyeless tom. I looked back at Aurora; she had a confused look on her face. "Did I say something wrong?" she meowed.

"No, no, no! I just... Heard voices.. Yeah! Leaf-bare really gets to you..." I laughed nervously.

"You're right! Now let's get into where I sleep at and keep all my prey!" she meowed and padded into a cave shaped den. I followed behind her.

Once we got inside, it was bright. Not too bright, but bright enough. I looked to my right to see a neat pile of prey. It was full of squirrels, mice, and some birds. There were some gulls in the pile, too. Who knew she had as much effort as a Driftclan cat to catch a gull by the Ocean Side?

Well, not me. I don't exactly care.

"Where's your nest?"

"Oh! I just sleep in the middle over here! It's super comfy!" she exclaimed and padded to the middle of the den. I followed her.

She wasn't wrong; it felt super comfy. I was only standing on the spot!

"I never got to ask, but why are you so far away from your clan?" Aurora meowed as she then padded out of the old Galaxyclan den with me behind her.

"I don't live with my clan anymore." I meowed back.

She turned to face me. "What?! Why?"

"I'll tell you while you show me around this camp."

I could hear Shred's laugh echo in my ears as we continued padding around.

Chapter 4

"Ripplewave?"

"Yes, Adderkit?"

"Can we please go see Thistlewhisper again? Please!" I mewed to my mother, following her voice.

"Adderkit..." I could hear the sadness in Ripplewave's mew.

"I can't be like this forever... I won't be able to do anything!" I yelled, then frowned.

"Don't worry, Adderkit!" I could hear Drizzlekit meow near me. "You'll be able to do anything and everything as a Warrior!"

I wish I could believe her.

"She's right, Adderkit." I felt a tongue scrape over my head.

I lifted my head up towards what I can only guess was Ripplewave. "Can we just see her one last time...?"

I heard my mother sigh and then pick me up by my scruff.

"Is she taking Adderkit there again?" I heard Avalanchekit mew.

A few heartbeats later, I was back onto my paws. I assumed I was now in Thistlewhisper's den.

"Hello, Rushstreak and Adderkit!"

Yep, I was. That was her mew.

"Can you please check my eyes again, Thistlewhisper? There has to be a way to heal this..." I mewed, lowering my head.

"Adderkit, I'm sorry. This is something that I can't cure, I would if I

could, but there is no healing option for this. You will just have to work around being blind," the medicine cat meowed to me.

I kept my head lowered, not responding to Thistlewhisper.

"If it makes you feel better, Otterpelt, a past medicine cat for Driftclan, only had sight in one of her eyes!" she said. It didn't make me feel better at all.

I then felt anger rise in me, turning around, with tears filling up in my eyes. "Well, at least she could see!" I turned around and ran in the direction in front of me. Not knowing where I was going, I ran into my mother. I could tell it was her by her scent.

"Calm down, Adderkit. Everything will be fine, you'll still be an excellent warrior!" she meowed to be and gave me tiny licks on my head.

I don't believe her.

Rushstreak picked me up by the scruff again, and I felt myself swinging slightly. I could only assume that she was leaving the medicine den.

I don't want to be a warrior.

I'd be the worst warrior in Driftclan if Featherstar made me one.

*

"I will catch you, Kingletkit!"

"No, you won't!" Kingletkit mewed back to a grey-furred she-cat that was chasing him from behind in circles in front of the Nursery.

The she-cat then jumped and pounced onto Kingletkit, pinning him to the snowy ground. "I win!" she mewed.

"No fair, Morningkit!" he wailed.

Morningkit looked over to see Frogkit trot up to the two. "It is fair! You were just too slow, Kingletkit!"

Morningkit gave a small chuckle and hopped off of him. Once he got up, he glared at his sister. "You're too big to even run fast, Frogkit!" he yelled.

Frogkit frowned and lowered her head.

"You better go before I rip your fur off, Kingletkit!" Morningkit hissed at the tom, frightening him and causing him to run back into the Nursery.

"That'll show em!" she meowed as she watched him run back inside.

"He's right, though..." Frogkit mewed quietly. "I can't keep up with the other kits at all..."

"Don't say that!" Morningkit mewed back and nuzzled Frogkit. "You can! Just because you're bigger than the other kits means nothing!"

She looked back up at the grey she-cat. "Really?"

Morningkit gave a wide smile. "Yeah!" she meowed. "In fact, that means you have an advantage over us! You'll be one of the best warriors ever!"

Frogkit smiled back and nuzzled her friend. "Thank you, Morningkit! You're amazing!"

"Mhm! Now... Do you want to play with me?" Morningkit asked.

"Hmm..." Frogkit then ran in a different direction away from her. "Catch me if you can!" she called.

"Oh, I sure will!" Morningkit responded, then chased after Frogkit.

Chapter 5

I will be the best warrior in Vertexclan! Yes, me, Sunkit! I puffed out my chest and smiled with pride. "What are you thinking about over there, Sunkit?" my outstanding mother, Emberfoot, asked me.

I turned away from the entrance of the Nursery and looked at her, "I'm thinking about how I will be the best warrior of Vertexclan!" I meowed out loud and smiled.

"The best?" Jumpkit scoffed at me. "There's no way in Starclan that you'll be the best. You act way too silly!"

"I do not!" I replied, then padded up to my sister.

"You can't stop slipping on the snow!" she mewed.

"So? Every cat slips on the snow!" I retorted.

Emberfoot sighed.

I then saw my other sister, Breezekit, look at me.

Oh no. I thought.

"Sunkit, a warrior knows how to watch their paws. Even in the snow. You, on the other paw, don't know how to do that." she mewed.

I looked away, embarrassed now.

"Jumpkit, Breezekit! Stop this and apologize to your sister!" Emberfoot said. I'm glad she said something.

"Sorry, Sunkit." they mewed in unison.

Those two never shut up. They always think they're better than me! One day, I will prove them wrong... One day, I'll show them both that I am the best warrior of Vertexclan.

Because I will be.

"Now come over here you two, it's time for me to clean your fur." my mother meowed.

Jumpkit padded over to her, and I gave an enormous sigh as I followed.

I love Emberfoot, but she doesn't have to do this every day... I thought.

*

I padded back into Vertexclan camp. My fur felt like it would never be warm again. Hunting in this cold was the worst idea Skystar had. I'd come up with better ideas.

Not hunting in the snow, that's for sure.

"Thanks for hunting with me, Lightningblaze and Lionstrike!" the deputy meowed to us and padded off.

"Well, that was nice," Lightningblaze said to me as we padded back to the Warriors' den.

"Would've been nicer if we *caught* something." I mewed back.

"Lighten up, Lionstrike! It could have been worse."

"Hunting in the sheer cold and finding no prey is worse, Lightningblaze."

That tom angers me sometimes. Come to think of it, I'm angered a lot more now. I don't think any cat has noticed, but that's okay.

I'm only like this because of Ripplewave.

Once we padded back into the den, I laid on my nest and sighed.

I can't stop thinking about her. The one thing I hoped hunting in the snow would take my mind off of. My eyes felt heavy as I slowly drifted off to sleep.

"P-Please come back to me, Ripplewave..." I whispered before

passing out.

*

"Lionstrike!" some cat yelled into my ear, then I jumped up. Unsheathing my claws as I stared at a short and black tom with no eyes.

"Who are you? And how do you know my name?" I hissed at the tom.

"Calm down! I'm not here to harm you, I'm here to help you get Ripplewave back!"

I froze for a heartbeat.

"Ripplewave...?" I mewed, sheathing my claws now.

"Yep! Yours once more!"

"How can you even help? You have no eyes for one... And for two, Ripplewave doesn't want to see me anymore..." I lowered my head.

"Just because I have no eyes, doesn't mean I can't see the pain you have in your heart, Lionstrike. You want her back, I know it. And I know she wants you back," he meowed. His voice was calming. I couldn't describe it.

"She does?" I looked back up at him.

"Yeah! And the next time I see you, I'll tell you how we'll get her to come back. Along with your six kits," he said.

She had a litter of six... I thought. *I wonder what they look like?*

I looked around, seeing only a few stars and some spots of shadows lurking around me. "So what's your name?"

"You can just call me... Shred!"

Once he told me his name, I jolted awake. I was still in the warriors' den.

My fur was still freezing, but not as much as before.

I didn't care, though.

I gave a smile as I thought to myself:

I'm getting you back, Ripplewave!

Chapter 6

"I will catch you, Frogkit!"

"Not if I run faster!"

I heard both Morningkit and Frogkit yell from outside of the Nursery. Do they have to be that loud?

I'm trying to sleep.

How can you even play out in the cold like that?

I hate playing anyway, it's never fun.

"Shadowkit!"

Oh no.

My sister, Morningkit, padded up to me with that dumb smile on her face, as always. "Shadowkit! Shadowkit!" she meowed in my face.

"What?!" I yelled.

"Hi!"

I gave a loud groan as I looked up at Fang. She was talking to Eclipse.

"Come play with Frogkit and I!" she mewed.

"I don't want to." I mewed back.

"Please!"

"No."

"Please!"

"No."

"*Please!*"

"*No!*" I yelled back.

"What are you yelling about, Shadowkit?" I looked up to see Fang staring down at me.

"He won't come and play with me and Frogkit!" Morningkit wailed.

I hate this so much.

"Shadowkit, please go play with your sister." Fang meowed.

"But, Fang-"

"Please."

At that moment, I felt as if I groaned so loud, Starclan heard me. I angrily stood up and padded up to Morningkit. She continued to have that dumb smile on her face as I stared at her. How does she smile so much?

It's annoying.

"Let's go!" she mewed and ran outside of the Nursery.

I slowly followed. I really didn't want to play. I just wanted to sleep.

A warrior doesn't sleep all day, Shadowkit! The words from Mistfall echoed in my head.

"Well, I for one will be the Driftclan warrior who sleeps all day... I don't want to-" some cat cut me off pouncing on me.

It was Frogkit. Her giant self had pinned me into the freezing snow. Did I mention it was freezing? Yeah, it is.

"Hey, Shadowkit! I haven't seen you out here before!" she meowed.

"That's because I don't *enjoy* coming out here, Frogkit." I replied, giving out a hiss.

Frogkit gave a small frown and got off of me. *Finally.* I thought as I got up and shook the snow off of my fur. But then...

Morningkit tackled me back into the snow. "Think quicker, Shadowkit!" she said.

I groaned. "Please get off of me."

"You'll have to push me off first!"

With a spurt of anger, I shoved my sister off me, causing her to crash into Frogkit. They both slid into the snow.

"There, I pushed you off. Happy now?" I mewed.

Morningkit quickly got up, her smile now wider than ever. Which bothered me.

"I'm going to get you now!" she yowled and charged towards me.

I'm not letting her pin me down in this dumb snow again. I ran to the side and nearly slipped, but I still dodged her. She turned around and charged again. This time, I charged at her as well. I saw a glimpse of Frogkit before I tackled my sister and pinned her onto the ground, my claws unsheathed.

"O-Ow! You're hurting me, Shadowkit!" Morningkit wailed.

"Shadowkit! Stop!" I heard Frogkit yell.

I looked down and noticed that my claws were digging into my sister's shoulders. I quickly got off of her and stepped back.

"I didn't mean to..." I paused as Morningkit got up and ran back into the Nursery with tears falling from her eyes.

Ugh... Another reason I don't play..

"You went too far, Shadowkit!" Frogkit ran after her.

"I hate my life," I whispered to myself and followed Frogkit back into the Nursery.

A few heartbeats later, I was laying by Fang again with my head on my paws. Morningkit was next to me. She had a few cobwebs on her shoulders because of the blood that had left them. I still saw the marks that I had left, too.

"Hey, Shadowkit?" Morningkit meowed. I lifted my head and looked at her.

"Don't feel sad about hurting me!" she said.

"Why?"

"Because, I'm fine now! And I don't enjoy seeing you sad!"

"But I hurt you... Some brother I am.. What kind of cat hurts their kin?" I replied.

"Shadowkit... You're still the best brother ever!" Morningkit mewed.

"I'm... The best brother ever..?" I wanted to smile now.

"You are! And you always will be! Just because we played a little rough means nothing... You're still my brother, and the best one ever!" she exclaimed.

I then smiled at Morningkit, and it did not surprise me to see that big and dumb smile of hers on her face again.

This time, it did not annoy me.

*

Mistfall quickly padded into Featherstar's den. "Shredflash is alive." he meowed.

Featherstar hopped on her paws. "What?! He's dead, he can't be alive."

"I saw him by the Ocean Side. Maybe that's just me though... But I had to tell you.." the tom meowed, frowning.

Featherstar just stared at Mistfall for a moment.

"Featherstar?"

"He can't be alive, Mistfall! You killed him!" the Driftclan leader shouted.

Mistfall got quiet.

"I-I'm sorry for yelling..." Featherstar started. "I just... If he's really alive... I don't.. I'll send out a patrol with you to check where you saw him at." she meowed.

"Alright..." Mistfall turned around and padded out of her den.

Mistfall could only hope that Shredflash was dead for good.

Chapter 7

Shredflash and Aurora padded around the old camp. Shredflash thought to himself for a while as Aurora meowed. "So, next to my den is the medicine den," she said.

"Mhm." Shredflash nodded.

"Well, she sure doesn't shut up!" Shred mewed.

You got that right... Shredflash thought.

"Let's go inside!"

"Sure."

Aurora padded inside of the medicine den and continued talking. "This is where Phoenix used to sleep at!" she meowed.

"I'm guessing Phoenix was the medicine cat?"

"Yeah! And she was a great one too, along with her apprentice, Nova!" Aurora meowed.

"Nova?!" Shredflash and Shred meowed in unison.

Aurora nodded and smiled.

"She was such a friendly cat, I wondered what happened to her?"

Shredflash sighed. "Who knows?"

The grey tom then shivered. He was getting colder by the heartbeat. "Can we go back into your den for a while? Before my fur freezes off.." he mewed.

"O-Oh! Sure!" Aurora quickly turned around and ran back into her den.

Shredflash soon followed.

Once he padded back in, he saw the she-cat lying in the middle of the den with a piece of prey in front of her paws. "Come share this prey with me! You must still be hungry!" she meowed to the grey tom.

Shredflash sighed and padded over to Aurora. He then laid next to her, looking down at the prey in front of them. It was a plump and red bird. Aurora had already taken a bite out of it, it wasn't a huge bite though.

She just really wants to make sure I get better, huh? Shredflash thought as he took a bite out of the bird and chewed.

"Looks like some cat has a liking towards you, Shredflash!" Shred said, then caused Shredflash to look at Aurora. Once he did that, she blushed and looked away quickly.

Shredflash gave a slight smile and continued eating the prey.

*

The moon was high in the night sky as Aurora snored quietly next to the grey tom. Shredflash was still wide awake. He didn't feel tired at all. Shredflash looked over at Aurora, seeing her back rise and fall slowly. "When will you take over her mind?" he meowed and turned to the eyeless tom, Shred.

"Soon, my friend!"

"Is that something that's really needed? I'm sure I could just persuade her.." Shredflash meowed, having a worried look.

"Shredflash... Sometimes we have to do things like this so you can get your revenge on the clans!" Shred meowed.

Shredflash saw darkness pour from the toms' eyeless holes.

And sometimes... Shred echoed in his head.

We have to do what we have to do, Shredflash... His voice was deeper

now.

Even if that means hurting our loved ones..

Shredflash lost himself in the darkness that poured from Shred.

"Shredflash... Who are you talking to?" Aurora's meow snapped Shredflash out of the trance.

The grey tom turned to the she-cat and smiled. "I must've been meowing in my sleep, sorry."

"Oh.." Aurora yawned. "Well, see you in the morning!" she laid her head back onto her paws and quickly drifted back off into sleep.

"Try to get some sleep, Shredflash!" Shred meowed and smiled.

"Sure thing."

Chapter 8

Adderkit sighed. She didn't feel like moving today. After being told that her blindness didn't have a cure, she laid beside her mother, Ripplewave, most of the time. She didn't want to play with the other kits or even open her eyes. *What's the point in opening my eyes when I can't even see!* She thought, then shut her eyes tighter. "Adderkit, what are you doing?" Adderkit heard the mew of her brother, Kingletkit.

"Sleeping."

"Well, you're not sleeping if you say something back!" Kingletkit mewed.

Adderkit's eyes shot open as she looked at where she thought Kingletkit was.

"I'm not over there!"

She followed his meow, now facing her brother. "Well, I'm sorry that I can't see for the rest of my life, Kingletkit.." she meowed.

"Why?"

"What do you mean, why?"

"Why can't you see?" Kingletkit meowed.

Adderkit was speechless. *If I could see you, I would claw your fur off right now!* She thought, nearly growling at him.

"Hey, Kingletkit, stop asking dumb questions and go freeze or something." Adderkit heard another meow close by, but it was one she hadn't heard before.

Who said that? She thought.

"Sure!" the light-brown furred tom ran out of the Nursery.

"K-Kingletkit, please come back!" Adderkit heard her mother call out to her sibling.

The brown and yellow furred she-cat then heard Fang's meow. "Shadowkit, what have I told you about telling other cats to go freeze?"

"I don't know." Shadowkit responded.

"Ripplewave! Ripplewave!" Adderkit heard Frogkit closeby.

"Yes?"

"Morningkit and I want to know if we can all go to the Ocean Side and play!" she exclaimed.

Oh, no... Adderkit thought. *Please say no...*

"Sure!" Ripplewave replied. "Only for a little while, though. What do you think about it, Fang?" Ripplewave turned to her.

Fang smiled. "I'm perfectly fine with it!"

All the kits in the Nursery were meowing in excitement, except Adderkit and Shadowkit.

"I'm staying here." Shadowkit mewed.

"Are you sure, Shadowkit?" his mother replied.

"Yes, I'm sure." the black tom quickly replied.

"I-I want to stay here too, Ripplewave! Please!" Adderkit begged.

"Well, okay then... Eclipse, can you watch Shadowkit and Adderkit for us?" Ripplewave turned to the sleeping she-cat.

Eclipse lifted her head and yawned, tiredness showing in her violet-blue eyes. "Yes, I can! You all go have fun now!" she mewed.

Both Ripplewave and Fang padded out the Nursery, the group of kits squabbled behind them.

"Finally... Peace and quiet..." Shadowkit meowed.

Adderkit got up and padded around. "Hey, Shadowkit!" she yelled. "Where are you?"

"No need to yell! I'm right in front of you." he mewed back. Adderkit plopped herself down right in front of Shadowkit.

"You're close." he meowed.

"S-Sorry!" Adderkit moved back.

"It's whatever."

"So, what are you doing?"

"Trying to sleep." Shadowkit mewed back to her.

"Don't you want to go play with the other kits?" Adderkit tilted her head to the side.

"No, they're too loud. Plus, I don't enjoy playing."

Adderkit thought for a moment before speaking up again. "Can we be friends?"

Shadowkit never thought about friendship with any other cat besides his sister. He looked up at Adderkit, "Sure, why not?"

Adderkit bounced up and down in excitement. "I have a friend, I have a friend!"

The black tom couldn't help but give a smile. "I'm sure Morningkit would love to be your friend too."

"Really?!"

"Yep."

Adderkit squealed and then purred.

"You can sleep next to me." Shadowkit mewed.

"Yay!" Adderkit then climbed on top of Shadowkit, her back legs in front of his eyes.

"I said next to me, not on top of me..."

"Sorry!" she chose not to move at all.

Shadowkit didn't care about it anymore and fell asleep.

It thrilled Adderkit that she made a friend.

*

It was now moonhigh. Morningkit and the rest of the kits were back in the Nursery. Shadowkit was still awake. The black tom sighed to himself. Morningkit turned her head to her brother, blinking some. "Shadowkit? You're awake?!" she whispered loud enough for him to hear her.

Shadowkit turned to Morningkit and sighed once more. "Yeah, just thinking about what Mistfall did when we went by the Ocean Side with him that day..." he whispered back.

"Oh! Didn't he yell something?" Morningkit licked her paw and rubbed it over her ear.

"He did. He yelled something about staying away from his family..."

"Isn't that Fang and us?" Morningkit questioned.

"Yes." *Of course it is, fish-brain!* Shadowkit thought.

"Why do you think he yelled that?" he added.

"Maybe he's tired! It was a long day for Mistfall. Remember all the hunting and patrolling he did that day?"

Shadowkit nodded.

"Shadowkit, Morningkit. Please get some rest." both siblings looked up to see Fang looking down on them.

"Yes, Fang." they meowed in unison, and both put their heads on

their paws.

I hope you're right about Mistfall being tired, Morningkit... Shadowkit thought as he drifted off into sleep.

Chapter 9

I don't know if we can be mates anymore, Lionstrike.

Ripplewave's words echoed in my head as I slowly opened my eyes. I rubbed them with my paws as I realized I was crying.

I miss her so much.

Why couldn't she just live with me in Vertexclan?

That doesn't matter now... That Shred cat will help me get her back. I'll do whatever it takes to have her be mine again.

And I mean it when I say: Whatever it takes.

I looked around the Warriors' den. It was empty, and I was the only cat in here. Did I want to go out there in the cold? No. Do I have to? Most likely.

I don't feel like getting my fur torn off by Skystar at the moment. So, I got up and stretched. I then padded outside of the den. The first thing that hit me was the chilly air. The snow felt like it would freeze my paw pads off. *Can leaf-bare just go already...?* I thought as I padded out into the middle of the camp.

Did I tell you it was cold yet? If I haven't, here it is now:

It's cold.

I tried to get used to it by padding around the camp. Is it working? A little. Will it make me warm? Nope. I padded past Skystar's den and then towards the Nursery. I stopped padding when I saw a familiar she-cat come up to me. It was my mother, Scorchwatcher. I haven't spoken to her in a while. I take back to when I was just a kit, snuggled up against Scorchwatcher, not having to worry about anything.

Now I'm older and I worry about Ripplewave.

"Hey, Lionstrike!" Scorchwatcher meowed, smiling.

"Hi, Scorchwatcher!" I meowed back, giving a fake smile. I didn't want her to see the pain I have behind it.

"How are you doing? We don't really talk as much, then again you probably don't want to talk to me!" she said.

What in the name of Starclan is she meowing about? She's my mother, of course I want to talk to her!

"Why wouldn't I want to talk to you?" I asked.

"I don't know... I've been thinking too much, and I don't want to lose you to Shredflash... Or your sisters... And-"

I cut my mother off and nuzzled her. "Scorchwatcher, there's no need to worry. We're all fine, the clan is fine. Vertexclan is strong, and if Shredflash comes around here, he won't know what got him!" I meowed proudly.

Scorchwatcher smiled at me and purred. "You're right!"

My vision then went black as I felt myself fall into the snow.

*

I quickly opened my eyes. I looked around to see a few stars and lurking shadows around.

I'm back here again.

"Hello, Lionstrike!" I shot my head towards the meow.

It was Shred. The cat who is helping me get Ripplewave back.

"What do you want?" I asked.

"I'm here to tell you something important! You need to have an apprentice! A certain one too!" he meowed.

"Who?"

"Look in the Nursery!"

"Wait wh-" My vision went black again.

*

"Lionstrike!" I heard Scorchwatcher meow in my ear, and I felt a paw prod my side. I hopped back up onto my paws and stared at my mother with wide eyes.

"Are you okay?"

I blinked before responding. "Yeah, I'm fine," I meowed before quickly padding into the Nursery.

My sister, Emberfoot, looked up at me. "Oh hi, Lionstrike!" she mewed.

"Hey."

I stared at Emberfoot's kits.

Which one was it?

One kit looked up at me and held my gaze.

It was Sunkit.

*

"Shredflash, you're back!" Aurora meowed as I padded into her den with a rabbit in my jaws.

I dropped the prey and smiled. "Why wouldn't I be?"

"I don't know!" she replied. "I had this weird dream though.. Can I tell you about it?"

"Sure."

"Some weird cat with no eyes was staring at me in the dream..." Aurora meowed.

"Hey! I'm *not* weird!" I heard Shred yell behind me.

You are to her. I thought.

"Anything else?"

"Something was pouring out of their eyes, I couldn't tell what it was though."

"Oh."

"It's whatever though!" Aurora said happily, then picked up the rabbit. She then padded over to the pile and dropped it there. "I'll be back!" I turned as I watched her leave the den.

I then turned to Shred, who was on my left. "Are you close to taking her mind over?" I meowed.

Shred nodded. "Yes!"

I'm very close! He echoed in my head.

Chapter 10

Shadowkit sat in front of the Nursery as he watched his sister, Morningkit, and Frogkit chase each other around in the snow. *Why am I not in the Nursery sleeping again*? Shadowkit thought, then looked around. His eyes widened as he saw Adderkit running towards him from the left. *Oh, no...* The black tom thought, and before he could think about anything else, Adderkit crashed into Shadowkit. Both kits rolled in the snow. Once they stopped rolling, Adderkit was on top of Shadowkit. The brown and yellow-furred she-cat sniffed Shadowkit, knowing his scent all too well by now. "Hi, Shadowkit!" she meowed, her tail swaying from side to side.

Shadowkit sighed. "Hi, can you get off of me now?"

"Maybe!" Adderkit replied and licked his cheek.

"Don't do that, please."

She licked his cheek again.

"Why are you doing this?" Shadowkit asked.

"It's fun playing with you!" Adderkit replied and purred.

"That's great and all, but can you please get off of me? It's freezing.."

"Okay!" the blind she-cat rolled off and next to him.

Shadowkit sat up and shook his fur, getting some snow off.

Adderkit sat up, facing away from Shadowkit without realizing it. "Do you want to sleep now?" she mewed.

"Sure." the black tom quickly responded.

"Shadowkit...?"

"Hm?"

"Can you carry me back to the Nursery? I don't know if I'll be able to get there myself.." she looked down and frowned.

"Why me?" Shadowkit mewed back.

"Because you're cool! And you're my best friend, I trust you!" Adderkit said.

Shadowkit stood there for a moment before responding, "Get on."

"Yay!" Adderkit exclaimed and jumped forward. She then stood there in confusion, looking around. "Where are you, Shadowkit?" she meowed.

"Behind you."

The she-cat whipped herself around and jumped forward once more, landing on Shadowkit's back. She allowed her body to weigh itself down onto Shadowkit's as he carried her back to the Nursery.

*

Morningkit opened her eyes. She looked around to see an ocean full of stars. Under her paws, the sand seemed to mix with the stars. *This isn't the Nursery..* She thought as she saw her brother Shadowkit, sleeping in the starry sand next to her. "Shadowkit, wake up!" Morningkit prodded him with her paw. The black tom growled low.

"What..? I'm trying to sleep.." he mewed.

"We're not in the Nursery!" Morningkit exclaimed.

"Why wouldn't we be in the Nursery?" Shadowkit opened one of his eyes and saw many stars in front of him. This caused his eyes to shoot open and sit up. "Why aren't we in the Nursery?!" he exclaimed.

"I don't know, but this place is cool!"

"What if we died?!"

"Cool!"

Shadowkit sighed heavily. *She's too positive sometimes...* He thought.

"You're both in Starclan!" a meow came from beside them. It caused Shadowkit to jump back. His fur sticking up on end and his claws unsheathed. Morningkit turned to look at the cat.

It was a she-cat.

She had fluffy and white fur and a wide smile across her face. "Hi!"

"Hi!" Morningkit replied in the same tone, with nearly the same wide smile.

Oh, no... There's two of them.. Shadowkit thought and sheathed his claws. "Why are we in Starclan?" he started, "Did we both die?"

The starry cat giggled. "Nope!"

"Then why did you bring us here?" Morningkit asked.

"Well, there's a prophecy involving you two!" the she-cat mewed.

"A prophecy involving us?" the littermates replied in unison.

She nodded. "Yep, now listen closely!"

Morningkit's eyes sparkled. While Shadowkit wasn't too interested, he still listened.

"Remember this well, my kin: *The morning's shadow will stop the shred once and for all*."

Morningkit gained a confused look on her face as she tilted her head.

"What? What does that mean?" Shadowkit mewed.

"It will all come to you soon, Morningkit and Shadowkit!" The she-cat meowed as she faded away.

"Wait, come back!" Shadowkit yelled. It echoed as both his and

Morningkit's vision went black.

*

Shadowkit and Morningkit's eyes both shot open at the same time. They looked at each other.

They stared for a moment before Shadowkit put his head back down onto his paws. "I'm going back to sleep."

"What about that prophecy thing?" Morningkit mewed.

"I wouldn't worry about it. It's nothing important."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, now I'm sleeping." Shadowkit shut his eyes and attempted to go back to sleep. Which he most likely wouldn't be able to.

"I'm going to worry about it!" Morningkit replied to him.

"You do that." her brother mewed.

Morningkit had a worried look on her face as she stared outside of the Nursery.

Chapter 11

"Wake up."

"Wake up."

"Wake up!"

Aurora jolted awake, panting, as she checked her surroundings. She couldn't tell where she was. Her vision was blurry, not noticing the cat standing in front of her. Aurora saw the shadow out of the corner of her eye as she whipped her head around to the front. "Wh-Who's there?" she hopped up onto her paws and looked around once more, her vision coming back to her. She noticed the face of a tom familiar to her.

"Sun?" she meowed.

The tom only stared, seeming to have anger in his eyes. "It was your fault."

"What?"

"It was your fault that Galaxyclan fell apart." he meowed.

"No, it wasn't! You and I both know what happened... I had nothing to do with it!" Aurora yelled back.

Sun's eyes went dark. "If you didn't speak to that cat.. None of it would have happened!" he hissed and leapt at Aurora. She screamed and flinched.

But Sun had disappeared once he was close enough to her. Aurora opened her violet eyes, they were full of confusion and fear as she glanced around. Not knowing what would come at her next.

Aurora, look at me.

Aurora snapped her head to the front to see an eyeless tom with

black fur. "Who are you...?" she meowed.

"Your new friend!" he meowed, padding closer to her.

"Stay away from me..." Aurora stepped back as the tom without eyes stepped closer.

"But why?"

"You're... You're weird!" she exclaimed.

The tom's smile faded as he gained an angered look. Aurora saw as darkness poured from his eyeholes. "I am *not weird.*" his mew was deep.

Aurora tried to move back, but she felt as if she froze in place. She closed her eyes, not wanting to look at the tom anymore. *Please, Starclan... Let me wake up..* she thought to herself. Aurora felt something breathe on her muzzle. She slowly opened her eyes.

Slowly...

She could see the slight figure of another muzzle.

Almost there...

As her eyes opened completely, she saw the tom and the darkness that spilled from his eyes up close. Her ears rang as she heard whispers get louder and louder. The whispers soon turned into yelling. She couldn't hear anything now. Aurora stared into the tom's eyeholes, feeling lost in them. Aurora then heard the tom's voice again. *You will help us.* He said.

Aurora slowly nodded.

You will help us, even if that means your life. His voice echoed in her head.

"I... I will help you... And Shredflash.. My life isn't important.." she meowed back.

"Good!" The tom mewed.

"*Now, wake up*!"

Everything went black for Aurora.

*

A few heartbeats later, she woke up and looked to her left to see Shredflash staring back at her. "Are you alright?" he asked.

Aurora nodded.

She wanted nothing but to follow his commands.

*

Want to know what I've been thinking about lately?

Go ahead, take a guess!

If you said "Ripplewave.", then you're correct!

I miss her. But you knew that already.

I padded over to Skystar's den; I needed to ask him something important. And that important thing was to ask him if Sunkit can be my apprentice. I'm guessing this was the start of Shred's help me get Ripplewave back. So it's nothing crazy.

For now.

I would even kill Skystar himself to get Ripplewave back. I thought as I entered his den. He looked up at me. "Need something?" he meowed.

"Yeah, since Emberfoot's kits will be an apprentice soon, I would like to know if I could be Sunkit's mentor?"

"Do you two have a special bond or something?" he replied, licking his fur.

I nodded. "Something like that."

"Well, sure then. I see no problem with it!" Skystar meowed back to

me.

"Thank you."

"Lionstrike."

I almost left his den, but I turned to the call of my name. "Yes, Skystar?"

"Are you okay?" he mewed.

I just stared at him for a second. His question surprised me. "Yeah, I'm fine!" I gave a fake smile.

"Alright then, just making sure."

I turned back around and padded out of the den, not wanting to stay there any longer. My smile went back to a frown as I padded back to the Warriors' den. The only thing that would make me give a genuine smile is Ripplewave. Her being beside me would just make me smile and be happy.

One day... She will be with me once more!

Chapter 12

"Shadowkit! Aren't you excited?" Adderkit bounced up and down in front of the black tom, who sighed.

"Adderkit, please turn around. Your tail is in my face again." he mewed back.

"O-Oh, sorry!" The blind she-cat turned to look at Shadowkit. She didn't look exactly at him, but it was close enough to face him.

Shadowkit was lying beside his mother, Fang. He watched as both Frogkit and his sister, Morningkit, pad up to both him and Adderkit. Shadowkit let out a heavy sigh. *Isn't Adderkit enough for now...?* He thought. Shadowkit didn't mind Morningkit and Adderkit, but they got annoying sometimes. "Come on, Shadowkit! Be excited! We're finally going to be apprentices soon!" Morningkit meowed, hopping up and down excitedly.

"Yeah, Shadowkit! We'll be closer to being warriors!" Frogkit added. She had a wide smile on her face.

"Being a warrior just means less sleep for me. Is there an option to be an elder?" Shadowkit meowed back.

"Don't be silly, Shadowkit!" Adderkit started. "You can't be an elder that soon!"

Shadowkit sighed once more, Fang licking his fur.

"Cats of Driftclan, please gather around the Tide Pool for a clan meeting!" A voice yelled from outside the Nursery.

"It's time!" both Morningkit and Adderkit meowed in unison.

Morningkit ran out of the Nursery, along with Frogkit and her littermates. Shadowkit stood up and stretched. "Will you carry me out there...?" Adderkit asked him.

"Sure."

Adderkit smiled and hopped forward. She nearly crashed into Shadowkit. "Hold on," he mewed and turned himself around, lowering himself a little. "Now get on."

Adderkit hopped forward, landing on the black tom's back. He then stood up and carried her out of the Nursery. "Aren't they cute?" Shadowkit heard Ripplewave meow before he left the den. Shadowkit did not know how to respond to that.

Once the two made it over to the Tide Pool, Shadowkit slid Adderkit off of his back and sat next to Morningkit. Featherstar continued to speak. "I have gathered you all here today because there will be eight new apprentices!" she meowed.

"First, Kingletkit, Wavekit, and Drizzlekit, please step forward," The Driftclan leader meowed.

The three kits that Featherstar called did as they were told, then padded up closer to the Tide Pool.

"You three are of age to become apprentices. From this day on, until you are of age to become warriors, you will be known as Kingletpaw, Wavepaw, and Drizzlepaw. Your mentors will be Gullstalk, Sagethorn, and Hollowcreek."

Gullstalk padded up to Kingletpaw, Sagethorn to Wavepaw, and Hollowcreek padded up next to Drizzlepaw.

"Now, Avalanchekit and Frogkit, please step forward." Featherstar meowed.

"You two are of age to become apprentices. From this day on, until you are of age to become warriors, you will be known as Avalanchepaw and Frogpaw. Your mentors will be Hailpad and Mistfall," she said.

Hailpad padded up to Avalanchepaw and Mistfall up to Frogpaw.

"Shadowkit and Adderkit, please step forward."

Adderkit nearly stepped away from the Tide Pool, but Ripplewave turned her around. Then Shadowkit stopped her from falling into the frozen water that sat in the Tide Pool.

"You two are of age to become apprentices. From this day on, until you are of age to become warriors, you will be known as Shadowpaw and Adderpaw. Shadowpaw, your mentor will be Eagleswoop, and Adderpaw, your mentor will be Sandcoat." Featherstar meowed.

Shadowpaw sighed as the cat who is now his mentor padded up beside him. Sandcoat padded over to Adderpaw. Her joyful expression soon turned into a frown.

"And lastly we have, Morningkit. Please step forward."

Morningkit had a wide smile on her face as she stepped up to the Tide Pool.

"You are of age to become an apprentice. From this day on, until you are of age to become a warrior, you will be known as Morningpaw. I will be your mentor, Morningpaw." Featherstar meowed.

Morningpaw gasped once she was told that the leader of Driftclan herself would be her mentor. Shadowpaw's eyes widened as he looked at his sister.

"Our previous mentors have taught us well, and I expect us all to pass down what we know to our apprentices," Featherstar said, and padded over to Morningpaw. "Since the Tide Pool has frozen over, you all may touch noses with your apprentices!" she added.

As Featherstar touched noses with Morningpaw, the other mentors did so with their apprentices.

"Kingletpaw! Wavepaw! Drizzlepaw! Avalanchepaw! Frogpaw! Adderpaw! Shadowpaw! Morningpaw!" Driftclan cheered for their new apprentices.

After the cheer, some cats disappeared to their dens. Some apprentices now padded to the Apprentices' den with pride. And

some stood with their new mentors. "We'll have lots of fun, Shadowpaw!" Eagleswoop meowed.

"I hope you're ready to become a great warrior, Morningpaw!" Featherstar mewed and purred.

Shadowpaw grunted, and Morningpaw gave a small squeal.

"Sandcoat... Can I even be a warrior? I'm blind..." Adderpaw mewed, sighing.

"Yes, you can. You can overcome that, Adderpaw. Being blind means nothing. I believe you will still be an excellent warrior!" Sandcoat replied with a smile.

Adderpaw still didn't think so.

*

I laid in my nest and sighed.

Why did they make me an apprentice?

I'll be the most useless warrior in all of Driftclan...

"Hey, Adderpaw!" I nearly jumped at the sound of Morningpaw's meow.

"Hi. I thought you were out with Featherstar?" I mewed back.

"I was, but I came back in here to talk with the other apprentices! Plus, you seem sad. Why?" she asked.

"You wouldn't care too much about it..." I replied, hoping she would go away.

"I do!" I then felt something push against my side, Morningpaw's scent heavy.

She's lying next to me... Great... I thought.

"What's wrong?" she mewed.

I might as well tell her at this point... Or she'll keep pestering me about it..

"I'm going to be the worst warrior in Driftclan."

"What?! No, you won't!" Morningpaw exclaimed.

"Yes, I will."

"Why do you think that?"

"I don't *think* that, Morningpaw. I *know* that. I'm blind and I can't see for the rest of my life. I won't be able to hunt or fight like a warrior... Sandcoat might as well not train me.." I meowed, nearly tearing up.

"Stop that!" Morningpaw then batted me with what felt like her paw. "Adderpaw... I believe you'll be one of the best Driftclan warriors ever! And Sandcoat is nice, he'll love training you!" I then felt a tongue lick my cheek. "Don't put yourself down, Adderpaw. I believe in you and every cat in Driftclan believes in you!" she mewed to me.

I wiped my teary blind eyes with my paw and smiled, "Thank you, Morningpaw.. I'll do my best... Even if I am blind!" I meowed.

I felt Morningpaw move away from me. "Yeah! You'll do amazing!" she exclaimed happily.

Morningpaw is such a great she-cat! I believe she'll be a wonderful warrior. I thought.

"Better get some sleep now, Adderpaw! I'm sure Sandcoat will find you soon!" she meowed.

I set my head on my paws, still having the smile across my face. I will get some sleep, Morningpaw.

And I *will* be a great warrior!

Chapter 13

Today is the day!

What day, you may ask?

Today is the day I, the amazing Sunkit, become an apprentice!

I hopped around with excitement around my mother, who smiled down at me. Emberfoot is great! "Someone's excited!" she meowed.

I nodded, "Yep! I can't wait to see who my mentor will be!" I mewed back and smiled.

"You aren't the only one becoming an apprentice, Sunkit. And don't think your mentor will be Skystar either. You wouldn't be good enough for him." my sister, Breezekit, mewed to me.

"I'm not!" I said.

I was.

I want Skystar to train me... I'll be the best warrior of Vertexclan!

"You'll probably get Buzzardgaze. He's just as clumsy and stupid as you!" Jumpkit said, which caused me to growl at her.

"I'm not clumsy and stupid!" I yelled back. I hate both of my sisters.

I hate them with all of my heart.

And I mean that.

"Breezekit, Jumpkit! What have I told you about being rude to Sunkit? She's your sister, for Starclan's sake!" Emberfoot yelled, batting them both with a paw.

"Sorry, Emberfoot..." they replied in unison.

That's what you get! I thought, then smirked.

"Cats of Vertexclan!" There was a voice that yelled from outside of the Nursery. "Please gather around the Sharp Stone for a clan meeting!" It sounds like Skystar!

I didn't want to wait any longer. So I ran out of the Nursery and quickly sat down by the Sharp Stone, now waiting for the rest of the clan to gather around.

I hope Skystar makes me his apprentice! I thought with excitement.

I saw as my sisters sat farther from me. They continued to look at me and then look back at each other.

I'm not surprised that they were talking about me.

They usually do that.

"I shall appoint three new apprentices!" he meowed. "Breezekit, Jumpkit, and Sunkit, please step forward."

I did as Skystar said and stepped forward. And so did my sisters.

"Jumpkit, you are of age to become an apprentice. From this day on, until you are of age to become a warrior, you will be known as Jumppaw and your mentor will be Rainpad." Skystar meowed.

I watched as Rainpad padded up next to Jumppaw.

Rainpad is always quiet. How will he train her? I thought.

"Breezekit, you are of age to become an apprentice. From this day on, until you are of age to become a warrior, you will be known as Breezepaw and your mentor will be Buzzardgaze." he said.

What?! She gets to train with the deputy! So lucky... I thought, then sighed.

Buzzardgaze padded up next to Breezepaw.

I watched as Skystar set his eyes on me. I wanted to be his

apprentice. I wanted him to train me to become the best warrior of Vertexclan!

"And Sunkit, you are of age to become an apprentice. From this day on, until you are of age to become a warrior, you will be known as Sunpaw, and your mentor will be Lionstrike." he meowed.

Lionstrike?! I turned around and watched him pad up next to me. *Why him? Why couldn't it be Skystar? I'm happy to be an apprentice now, but why did it have to be Lionstrike?!* I thought. About a moon or two ago, he came into the Nursery and just stared at me. I never knew why.

He's weird.

Skystar then gave a smile. "Your previous mentors have taught you well and I expect you all to pass down what you know to your apprentices." he meowed.

The mentors nodded and touched noses with their apprentices. Lionstrike touching mine.

"Jumppaw! Breezepaw! Sunpaw!" the clan cheered.

"The clan meeting is now over!" Skystar yelled and padded back into his den.

"Has he visited you too?" Lionstrike instantly meowed to me.

"What? Who?" I questioned, giving a confused look.

"You'll see soon." he said and headed back to the Warriors' den.

I don't know how to feel about having Lionstrike as my mentor...

*

"Did I do the right thing by pairing Sunpaw with Lionstrike?" I asked Buzzardgaze. There was a slight shake in my mew.

"Why, sure! Why wouldn't it be?" he replied.

"I don't know.. I just feel like it was a mistake to put them together. What if they hate each other?"

"Well, we'll just have another cat train, Sunpaw!" Buzzardgaze meowed and smiled.

I looked away for a bit, still worried.

"Skystar, look at me." Buzzardgaze said.

I turned my head to face him, blushing.

"Everything's fine, there's nothing to worry about! Sunpaw showed no hostility towards Lionstrike. So they will be fine!" he meowed.

"I guess you're right..." I replied.

Then the unexpected happened.

Buzzardgaze licked my cheek.

Buzzardgaze licked my cheek...?

Buzzardgaze licked my check?!

Buzzardgaze licked my cheek!!!

"Never doubt your decisions, Skystar! You're amazing and whatever decision you go with, stick with it." he said.

I had no words; I didn't know how to respond or how to react.

"Th-Th-Thank you, Buzzardgaze..." I mewed, my pelt burning up now.

"Anytime, Skystar! Maybe we can go see the Ocean Side later? I heard the ice looks pretty!"

I only nodded, not being able to let out another mew.

"Great!" He meowed happily. "I'll see you later!" The Vertexclan deputy padded out of the den.

Buzzardgaze licked my cheek.

*

My eyes shot open.

I was in this place again.

I looked to my left to see my apprentice, Sunpaw, wake up and hop on her paws. "Where am I?" she meowed, looking around.

"You're going to meet Shred." I meowed, causing her to look at me.

"Who? Who are you talking about, Lionstrike? Who is Shred?!" she yelled.

"I'm Shred!" Both Sunpaw and I jumped and turned to the eyeless tom.

"Why do you have no eyes?!" Sunpaw yelled.

"Stop yelling, gull-brain." I swiped my paw over her ear.

"Sorry... But why am I here?" she asked.

"You're both here so you can train to get what you want!" Shred mewed and smiled.

"Get what we want...? You can help me become the greatest warrior of Vertexclan?!" Sunpaw exclaimed.

"Yep! And much more!"

"Wow..." she started. I watched as she looked at her paws in amazement. She then looked back up at Shred. "Really?"

Shred nodded vigorously. "I can even help you be better than your sisters."

"I'm in! When do we start?" Sunpaw had a wide smile on her face.

"The next time you sleep!" Shred mewed and my vision went black.

*

I woke up in the Warriors' den.

I'm now closer to getting you back, Ripplewave.

Chapter 14

I opened my eyes and yawned.

Yep, I'm still blind.

How great.

I sniffed the air and looked to the right. Shadowpaw's scent was heavy as I gave a smile. I sometimes wonder what Shadowpaw looks like. I bet he looks amazing! I hope I look amazing too... I wouldn't want to look bad for-

"Morning, Adderpaw." I jumped once I heard Shadowpaw's mew.

"H-Hi, Shadowpaw!" I replied, giving a nervous smile. Or I think I did.

"Sleep well?" He meowed back.

"Yes!" I quickly replied.

"That's good. I'm going to go find Eagleswoop now. He's most likely forgotten that I'm his apprentice now," Shadowpaw meowed.

"Okay!" I mewed back.

I heard some noises. It sounded like he was getting up. Then I heard pawsteps in front of me and slowly getting more quiet after a few heartbeats. *I guess Shadowpaw left then...* I thought, sighing. I wanted to talk to him more, because I honestly don't want to train considering the fact that I would be useless in battle because I'm not able to see.

Yes, I remember what Morningpaw said to me.

But I'm still uncertain.

I guess I'll just have to try my best for her, for Sandcoat, and for

Shadowpaw too!

I must try my best for Driftclan! I thought and stood up, puffing my chest out proudly.

"Hey, Adderpaw!" I jumped back at a meow I heard in front of me, nearly unsheathing my claws before I realized that was the meow of Sandcoat. "You seem ready to start our training!" He added.

I heaved a sigh, but then smiled. "Yeah!" I mewed back.

"Great! Are you able to follow my scent?" Sandcoat said.

I nodded. "Yes!" *I don't know what else I could do...* I thought.

"Come on then! It may be harder for you to track my scent in the snow, so I'll say something every once in a while if you need to find out where I am." he meowed.

"Don't worry, Sandcoat. I've been teaching myself how to track scents!" I replied.

"Oh, yeah?"

"Yep!"

"Then I want you to find me by following my scent," Sandcoat meowed.

I then heard pawsteps. I assumed Sandcoat left the Apprentices' den.

I have to find him now.

Oh no.

*

Where in the name of Starclan is Eagleswoop? I thought, then sighed.

Why did I have to get Eagleswoop?

I padded around the cold Driftclan camp as I continued to look for

my mentor. He told me we would start our training today. I stood in the middle of the camp and took another glance around. Seeing every cat *but* the one I was looking for. You would think some cats would stay in their dens because of the sheer chilly breeze that would hit their fur.

Nope.

Even the medicine cat was roaming around the camp.

Ugh, where is my mentor? I thought before a cat padded up to me. It was Hollowcreek.

"Hey, Shadowpaw!" she meowed and smiled.

"Hi."

"Are you looking for Eagleswoop?" Hollowcreek asked.

I nodded.

"He's in the Warriors' den if you need him!"

"What is he doing?" I asked.

"Sleeping."

And with that, I stopped talking to Hollowcreek and stormed over to the warriors' den. *He better not be sleeping... Or I will claw his pelt off!* I thought and padded into the warriors' den to see if the one I call my mentor was sleeping.

And he is.

I hissed in annoyance. *How could he be sleeping when he has an apprentice to train?!* I padded over to Eagleswoop and swiped my left paw over his ear. The dark cream-furred tom jolted awake, looking up at me and shaking his head and blinking. "Oh hey, Shadowpaw!" he then yawned.

"*Hi.*" My mew was stern.

"What are you doing in here? Don't you have to train?"

I stared at him.

I cannot express how much anger I feel inside me right now.

"You're my mentor, fish-brain!" I yelled and hissed.

My mentor suddenly hopped up onto his paws with a nervous look on his face now. "S-Sorry, Shadowpaw! I forgot we were going to train today!" Eagleswoop meowed.

I sighed. "It's whatever... Can we just start already?"

Eagleswoop nodded and padded to the entrance of the den. "I'm not even outside the warriors' den yet and it's freezing!"

I rolled my eyes as I passed him and left the den. He followed behind me.

I stopped and turned to him. "What are we doing first?" I asked.

"I don't know!" Eagleswoop replied and smiled.

You have got to be kidding me...

*

"The ocean looks so pretty!" Drizzlepaw meowed to her mentor.

"You should see it during newleaf!" Hollowcreek replied and purred.

Hollowcreek had taken her apprentice around Driftclan territory. She wanted to show her around before they started training. She even took Drizzlepaw closer to Vertexclan territory, so she could see where Vertexclan clan lives.

"Don't we have to swim, Hollowcreek?"

"Yep!"

"How would we do that when the ocean is like that...?" Drizzlepaw had a confused looked on her face.

"Don't worry, Drizzlepaw! I'm sure there's an area of water that's not frozen around the territory!"

"Can't wait!" the apprentice replied. Then she turned and stared at the vast ocean of ice.

"Yeah! It'll be a lot of fun!" Hollowcreek replied and smiled.

Chapter 15

"Go see if there's any prey over by that bush." I ordered Aurora, then pointed my tail over to a bush with snow all over it.

"Yes, Shredflash." she meowed back and padded over to the bush. She leaned down and lifted her tail, waiting for some movement.

I didn't like this.

I frowned as I watched Aurora jump into the bush, hearing a small squeak before the rustling stopped.

How did Shred do it?

How did he make it so Aurora would listen to everything I say? It's...

Sad.

Aurora has nothing to do with me wanting revenge against the clans, yet we dragged her into it just because I met her. I sometimes wonder why Shred won't allow me to do this alone. I know how to kill, and I still have enough speed to get away. Then again, I *did* nearly die when that cat from Driftclan tore a new one into me. Even before that, I fought two cats on my own. I turned to see as Aurora padded out of the bush with a tiny mouse in between her jaws. "Let's head back now," I meowed.

Aurora nodded in response as I padded back to her den, Aurora right on my tail.

*

Aurora was sitting outside of her den, staring straightforward and letting the slow falling snow hit her fur.

Shred told me to command her to sit out there.

"I can't just have her sit out there." I meowed to the eyeless tom.

"Does it truly matter, Shredflash?" He replied. "You won't need her for much longer!"

I stared at Shred for a few heartbeats, nearly getting lost in his eyeholes, before I turned back to Aurora. "Aurora, come back in here." I meowed.

"Yes, Shredflash." she replied, and padded back into the den.

"Come lie next to me."

"Yes, Shredflash," she obediently lied down next to me.

I sighed again.

Maybe I shouldn't mind it anymore.

"This is all for the best, Shredflash!" Shred meowed to me and smiled.

The clans need to pay.

And I'll do whatever it takes to make sure I get my revenge.

*

Sunpaw jolted awake and looked around the Apprentices' den. *Where's that Shred cat? Oh wait, he only will appear while I'm sleeping...* She thought and saw that her sisters were both gone. *Who cares about them, anyway? I'm going to be the best warrior in Vertexclan!* Sunpaw hopped up onto her paws and smiled. *And I'll be even better than my sisters... I have to go find Lionstrike!* Sunpaw then ran out of the apprentices' den, out into the freezing cold. She could feel the snow between her paws as she ran towards the Warriors' den, making sure she doesn't slip.

I would hate for my sisters to see me slip on the snow again...

Right as she came up to the entrance, Sunpaw saw as a familiar cat padded out and stared at her. It was her mentor, Lionstrike. "You're

up early." he meowed to her.

"Can we train? Please!" she begged.

"Isn't it best to wait for when we go see Shred?" Lionstrike replied, looking around to make sure no other cat was around them.

"Can't we just train while we're awake too...?"

Lionstrike sighed in annoyance. "No."

"Please!"

"No."

"Please!"

"No."

"Lionstrike, I want to be the best warrior of Vertexclan!" Sunpaw meowed.

"That's great."

"Can we do something, then?" the apprentice asked.

Lionstrike thought for a bit before coming up with something. "We can take a stroll." he meowed. "But not for long, it's chilly out here." he added.

"Okay!" Sunpaw replied.

Lionstrike padded away from the warriors' den and headed to the entrance of the camp. Sunpaw following behind him. She shivered as the chilly wind hit her fur. Both cats then padded out of the camp so they could take their stroll as they waited for moonhigh.

*

"You saw... Shredflash?!" I exclaimed to Marigoldfur, who nodded in response.

"What was he doing by the ocean side?" I asked.

"I would've told you that already if I knew, Nova..." Marigoldfur mewed.

I sighed. "Right, my mistake."

"I thought Shredflash was... Gone..."

"He is." I tried to prevent my meow from shaking. "The vision couldn't mean he's coming back to Vertexclan, right?"

"I don't know, Nova..." Marigoldfur said.

I started pacing back and forth, worrying even more now. "One of the Driftclan warriors killed him. There's no way he could be alive..." I mumbled.

He couldn't be alive...

Right...?

Why else would Shredflash show up in Marigoldfur's vision, then?

I continued pacing, stopping once I noticed that the other Vertexclan medicine cat was staring at me with a worried look. "Sorry."

"It's okay.."

I haven't seen Shredflash for moons... Ever since he murdered his father and took one of Birdstar's lives...

It still surprises me to this day that Shredflash did those things.

I wish there was I way I could have prevented it, but it's too late for that now.

"What will we do, Nova?" Marigoldfur asked.

I sighed, "We must tell Skystar and see what he says." I meowed back.

Marigoldfur nodded and padded out of the medicine den. I was following close behind.

I hope we can do something about Shredflash if he is alive...

I'm not losing anymore of my clanmates.

Chapter 16

Inside the Apprentices' den in Driftclan, Shadowpaw slept peacefully. His breathing was steady as his back rose and slowly fell. His head was on his paws. Shadowpaw enjoyed sleeping a lot, and he loved when he's not disturbed.

Unfortunately for him, he wouldn't be peacefully sleeping for long.

"Oh, Shadowpaw!" there was a loud meow from outside the den which caused Shadowpaw's eyes to shoot open. He let out a low hiss as he saw his mentor pad inside.

"What do you want?" Shadowpaw's mew was stern.

"What do you mean? It's time to hunt!" Eagleswoop mewed back.

"I don't want to."

"Too bad!"

The black-furred tom groaned as he groggily got up from his nest. *And just when I thought I wouldn't get bothered today...* He thought and stretched before padding up to Eagleswoop. "Isn't it too cold to be hunting?"

"It's never too cold for anything! Let's go!" Eagleswoop padded out of the den.

Shadowpaw looked back to see some other apprentices resting peacefully in their nests. He sighed and turned back around, padding after his mentor.

*

"How should we start?" Eagleswoop questioned.

"Aren't you the mentor here?" Shadowpaw replied.

"Yeah!"

Shadowpaw held back a hiss of annoyance. *Could he be anymore dense?!*

"Hmm..." Eagleswoop sat down in the snow and started thinking.

"Wouldn't we have to sniff out the scent of prey...?" Shadowpaw meowed.

"Yes, we would! Nice thinking, Shadowpaw!" his mentor replied.

There was silence for a few heartbeats.

"Well, try it for yourself!"

"Wouldn't I need a demonstration...?"

"Oh, right!" Eagleswoop then lifted his nose and sniffed the air. "It'll be harder because of the snow, but there should be something around here..." The tom sniffed the cold air for longer. "I may have got something!"

"Okay," Shadowpaw meowed.

Eagleswoop slowly padded forward, his apprentice following. Soon, the dark cream-furred tom stopped in his tracks. His ears perked up as he looked around, seeing the snow on the ground move. Shadowpaw watched his mentor with curiosity. *I'll stand in awe if he catches something.* Shadowpaw thought as he watched his mentor crouched down, lifting his haunches and tail in the air. Eagleswoop crept towards the spot of now that had moved, the scent of prey heavy in his nose. His apprentice smelled the scent, too. Eagleswoop stopped, his tail steadily swayed in the air as his eyes were on a patch of snow. The nose of a mouse soon popped out of the patch, its head came out right after. Eagleswoop stopped moving his tail, waiting for the right moment to strike. *How does it not notice him yet?!* The black-furred apprentice seemed confused. Shadowpaw then watched as Eagleswoop lept at the mouse once its body was out. The mouse moved and scurried off, but the tom wouldn't let it get away that easily. Eagleswoop dashed after his prey. It surprised Shadowpaw with how quick his mentor was. It

didn't take Eagleswoop long before he lept at the mouse again and pinned it under his paw, claws unsheathed. His claws dug into the back of the mouse, watching it as it slowly went limp. Shadowpaw ran up to his mentor, nearly skidding in the snow once he stopped. "Wow..." was the only thing that Shadowpaw mewed.

"Now, it's your turn, Shadowpaw!" Eagleswoop turned to him and smiled. "First, try to sniff out your prey!" he meowed and covered the now dead mouse with snow so that its scent wouldn't distract his apprentice.

Shadowpaw lifted his nose in the air and gave it a few sniffs. He could feel the chilly air enter his nose. He hissed in annoyance. "I can't do it!" Shadowpaw said.

"Yes, you can!" Eagleswoop encouraged his apprentice. "Just focus."

Shadowpaw sighed and lifted his nose in the air once more. Ignoring the freezing air in his nose. "If you need to move around, you can!" his mentor meowed.

Shadowpaw nodded in response and padded forward. Continuing to sniff the air for any scent of prey. His eyes widened as he then caught something other than the cold air in his nose. *I'm going to catch whatever prey there I smell now.* He thought and padded towards the direction the scent was coming from, his mentor not far behind. Shadowpaw then stopped once he saw something move, but it wasn't in a patch of snow.

It was a white rabbit with black spots.

You're mine. Shadowpaw thought and crept towards the unsuspecting prey. His mentor was watching from behind. Once the black-furred tom was close enough, he crouched down, studying the rabbit. He mimicked what Eagleswoop had done and lifted his tail in the air. The rabbit was sniffing away the snow on the ground. The rabbit would have blended in with the snow if the black spots weren't on it. Shadowpaw smirked as he then unsheathed his claws and lept at the rabbit.

He had done it.

Shadowpaw dug his claws into the haunches of his prey and let them sink deeper in. The rabbit tried its best to get away, but then Shadowpaw bit the neck of the rabbit, sinking his teeth in. *You won't get away from me.* He thought as the rabbit went limp. Shadowpaw got up and stared down at his first catch and smirked. "Too easy."

Eagleswoop ran up to his apprentice. "Excellent job, Shadowpaw!"

"Can I hunt for another piece of prey?" the black-furred tom meowed to his mentor.

"Sure! I don't know how much more prey will be around, but we can try our best to find some!" Eagleswoop replied, smiling.

Maybe having Eagleswoop as a mentor isn't so bad. Shadowpaw thought.

*

"Alright, Morningpaw, I'll be teaching you how to fight." the Driftclan leader, Featherstar, meowed to her apprentice.

"Yay!" Morningpaw replied, bouncing up and down excitedly.

Featherstar smiled. She had brought Morningpaw out to the Ocean Side to train. "I want you to do your best to pin me," she meowed.

"Okay!" Morningpaw replied, leaping at her mentor now.

Featherstar smirked and dodged it. Morningpaw tried leaping at Featherstar again, but she just dodged. "You're going to have to do more than just jump, Morningpaw!"

Morningpaw then charged at Featherstar, but then Featherstar only charged back, pouncing onto her apprentice and pinning her. "Aww! I almost had you!" Morningpaw pouted.

"It's all good, Morningpaw. This won't be the first or the last time we do this. You need to predict where your opponent will go or what they will do next." Featherstar meowed as she got off of Morningpaw.

"Got it!" Morningpaw hopped up onto her paws and readied herself.

"Ready to keep going?" Featherstar asked.

"Yep!" Morningpaw replied, then ran at her mentor again.

*

Where in the name of Starclan could Sandcoat be?! Adderpaw thought to herself and sighed. She's been following her mentor's scent around for what felt like forever to her. *It doesn't help that it's cold out here...* Adderpaw knew she was still in Driftclan camp, but she didn't know if she was walking in circles or not. *His scent is all over the place!* Adderpaw thought as she continued sniffing the air and following his scent. The apprentice then bumped into someone. She looked up and sniffed, the scent familiar in her nose...

"Ripplewave?" she meowed.

"Hello, Adderpaw!" She meowed back and smiled. "How's the training going?"

"I'm having trouble sniffing out Sandcoat's scent... He wants me to find him, but I do not understand where he is.. His scent is everywhere!" Adderpaw exclaimed.

"While I can't tell you where he is. I'll tell you this, Adderpaw," Ripplewave started. "Find where his scent is strongest and go from there."

"Thanks, Ripplewave!" Adderpaw replied to her mother.

"Mhm! Good luck!" Ripplewave then padded away from her daughter.

Find where his scent is strongest... Adderpaw thought, turning around. *I'll start back at the Apprentices' den.* She followed Sandcoat's faint scent back to the apprentices' den.

A few heartbeats later, Adderpaw stood in front of the den. *His scent is powerful here!* The apprentice then proceeded forward to smell multiple scents. *Am I in the Warriors' den...?* She sniffed once more.

Shadowpaw has been in here though...

I must be in the apprentices' den! She thought.

She continued padding forward, Sandcoat's scent getting stronger as she went farther in. Adderpaw then bumped into another cat. "Sandcoat?!" she meowed out loud.

"Correct!" it was Sandcoat's meow.

Adderpaw gasped and backed up. "I did it?"

"Yep! I circled around the camp and then came right back here!" her mentor replied.

"That explains why I was having trouble! I got confused about where you were... It seemed like you were everywhere!" Adderpaw exclaimed.

"Yeah! You're great at tracking scents though, marvellous job! I'm proud of you!" Sandcoat mewed happily.

"Proud of me...? Yay!" Adderpaw hopped up and down like a kit.

"We still have a long way to go though, Adderpaw," he added.

Adderpaw smiled. "I'm ready for whatever is next for us!" the apprentice replied.

"Great! We'll practice something else tomorrow then, okay?" Sandcoat meowed and padded towards the entrance of the den.

"Okay!"

Adderpaw turned around as she heard pawsteps leaving the apprentices' den.

She smiled.

She was happy to have Sandcoat as her mentor.

Chapter 17

There's nothing to worry about.

The clan is fine.

There's no danger at all.

I'm just lying in my nest, trying to rest, but it doesn't seem to work.

Maybe I need not sleep. I need...

Buzzardgaze.

I can't stop thinking about him. He's been on my mind for what seems like forever now. I need to get my mind off him somehow. I have to think about leader things and not about having a mate. I then heard pawsteps enter my den as I look up to see both Nova and Marigoldfur. The medicine cats of Vertexclan. It's obvious that they have something to talk about. Maybe this will get my mind off of Buzzardgaze!

"Skystar," It was Nova that meowed first. Both she and Marigoldfur had worried looks on their faces.

This couldn't be good.

"Yes?" I meowed back, expecting the worst.

"Shredflash may be alive." Nova said.

My heart felt like it sank deeper than the ocean could ever take me. What Nova had meowed would haunt me for the rest of my nine lives. This couldn't be true. "There's no time to joke around, Nova."

"S-Skystar..." Marigoldfur stepped forward.

I stared at the golden-furred medicine cat, hoping she would say otherwise.

"I saw a vision..."

No...

No.

Shredflash can't be alive. If that's true, then he's going to come for me first... I can't have this. After me, he'll attack the rest of Vertexclan. "What did you see in the vision?"

"I saw Shredflash at the Ocean Side... And he attacked two other cats..." Marigoldfur meowed.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I didn't want to believe what I was hearing. It must be a dream I am having then. "Stop this!" I then shouted at Marigoldfur, causing her to move back towards the entrance of my den.

"But Skystar-"

"No! Leave my den, now!" I yelled, cutting off Nova, my fur sticking up on end now.

Both medicine cats turned and padded out of the den. I didn't want to hear or believe anything that they were meowing at me. Shredflash isn't alive.

He's not alive.

He is not alive!

*

Marigoldfur woke up. She instantly recognized where she was once she saw the stars in the sand. *I'm in Starclan.* She thought as she saw the vast ocean filled with stars. "It's nice to see you again, Marigoldfur!" the golden-furred she-cat whipped around once she heard that familiar meow.

"Otterpelt!" Marigoldfur replied and padded up to the old Driftclan medicine cat.

She smiled, but that smile soon turned to a serious look. "I feel you know why you are here."

Marigoldfur nodded. "Shredflash is alive."

Otterpelt sighed, "Yes, and we don't know what he has planned."

"What will we do? Skystar wouldn't listen to Nova and I..." Marigoldfur's head lowered.

"Skystar will have to listen soon. If he doesn't, then Vertexclan will be in more danger than both clans combined," Otterpelt meowed back. "For now, tell Featherstar to be careful, because Shredflash could be around at any moment."

"I will tell her as soon as possible, Otterpelt. Thank you."

"Anytime, Marigoldfur!" she replied, smiling now. She faded away.

A few tears fell down Marigoldfur's face. "I miss having you around," she meowed before her vision went black.

*

"Lionstrike!"

"Sunpaw!"

My eyes shot open at that familiar mew. In front of me was the only eyeless tom I knew, Shred. And next to me was my apprentice, Sunpaw. Her eyes were wide open and looking around the area like she's never been here before. "Where am I?!" she exclaimed.

I cuffed her over the ear with my paw. "We're with Shred again, gull-brain," I retorted.

"Oh! Right." she meowed back.

I sighed and looked back over at Shred, that smile across his face still there as usual. "So, what are we doing?"

"Fighting!"

I'm not surprised we have to fight each other first.

"Should I teach Sunpaw some moves?" I asked.

"Nope, just go all out and don't stop until I say so!" Shred mewed.

"Huh?!" Sunpaw said.

"It's best to learn from feeling the pain yourself." Shred started. "Soon you will know how to counter these things!"

As I turned to face Sunpaw. She looked like she was shaking in fear. I could tell that she didn't want to do this. I unsheathed my claws.

There was nothing I could do to help her.

I growled at my apprentice. "Now, don't run away. I want you to fight back," I said.

"Lionstrike, I don't like-" I cut her off by scratching my claws across her muzzle, causing her to screech in pain and back away. The left side of her muzzle bleeding now.

That will leave a scar. I thought, lunging at her again. I knocked her over before she could even react. I saw as tears were running down her face as she looked up at me with frightened eyes. A part of me wanted to stop, but there was only one reason I chose not to:

Ripplewave.

I wanted her back and the only way I would get her back is by doing what Shred says. I stared down at Sunpaw, hoping she would attack or run away from me.

She didn't move one bit.

I hope you understand, Sunpaw. I thought and swung my unsheathed claw at her shoulder.

Her screeches echoed into nothingness as I continued attacking my apprentice.

Chapter 18

"Come on, Shadowpaw. Wake up!" Adderpaw nudged the black-furred apprentice.

He only grunted and kept his eyes closed. "No, I refuse to train today." he meowed back.

"You can't just not train today, Shadowpaw! That's crazy!" Kingletpaw meowed, getting up to stretch himself out.

"I can." he let out another grunt as he turned his head to the side.

Adderpaw sighed. She didn't understand why Shadowpaw acted like that sometimes. She was going to nudge him again, but her mentor Sandcoat had padded into the Apprentices' den. "Come on, Adderpaw! We have a new lesson!" he meowed.

"Coming!" she meowed back. She stood by Shadowpaw for a while longer before padding over to her mentor. Adderpaw had then followed him out once she heard his pawsteps.

"You should try to get your brother up, Morningpaw." It was Frogpaw that meowed to the fluffy and grey-furred she-cat.

Morningpaw nuzzled Frogpaw, causing Frogpaw to blush. "Sure!" She then got up and padded over to her brother. "Shadowpaw, get up! What would Mistfall think of you doing this?" she meowed.

Shadowpaw opened his periwinkle eyes and looked up at his sister. "Don't know, don't care." he replied, lying his head back onto his paws, closing his eyes once more.

Morningpaw frowned. She then felt as another cat brushed up against her side. Morningpaw turned to see Frogpaw standing next to her, her frown turned to a smile. "Forget about Shadowpaw... Let's go find our mentors!" the white and silver-furred she-cat meowed.

"Okay! I'll check on you later, Shadowpaw!" Morningpaw meowed and padded out of the apprentices' den, Frogpaw happily following behind her.

Shadowpaw grunted once more, and he drifted off into sleep.

*

Adderpaw followed her mentors' scent and the sound of his pawsteps as they headed away from Driftclan camp. "Where are we going, Sandcoat?" she asked.

"We're just going behind the camp!" Sandcoat replied, then stopped padding.

Adderpaw bumped into Sandcoat once he stopped. "S-Sorry!" she apologized.

"No need to apologize, Adderpaw." he replied, turning to face her now. "I'm going to teach you how to meditate!"

"Meditate? What's that?" Adderpaw tilted her head to the side.

Sandcoat smiled. "It's where you close your eyes and focus on one thing in your mind and achieve a calm and stable state."

"That sounds fun!" Adderpaw meowed back.

"Good, because it is! And it's relaxing, too! And it helps when hunting prey and fighting." the cream-furred tom added.

"How do you do it?"

"You close your eyes and focus on the calming sounds around you." Sandcoat said.

"Do I have to close my eyes?" Adderpaw mewed.

"Well, I guess if you want to!" Sandcoat seemed curious now.

Adderpaw kept her eyes open, listening to the surrounding sound. All she could hear was the wind that was blowing by her. A few

heartbeats later, she heard the snow crunching near her. *Is Sandcoat moving?* she thought, then sniffed the air. *He isn't in front of me anymore.* She listened closely. The crunching had stopped behind her. Adderpaw whipped around and sniffed the air once more, her mentors' scent heavy in her nose. "Sandcoat?", she meowed.

"Yep! Excellent job, Adderpaw!" Sandcoat purred.

Adderpaw smiled at her mentor.

"I want you to meditate anytime you get the chance, Adderpaw. And every time you do it, I want you to focus on every scent and sound around you, okay?" Sandcoat mewed.

"I will!" Adderpaw replied.

"Let's get back to camp, then. I'm sure there's a juicy fish for us to share!" Sandcoat then padded back towards the camp.

"Yay!" the apprentice followed behind.

*

"Don't worry, Frogpaw, you got this! Just do your best!" Mistfall encouraged his apprentice.

"Yeah, you got this!" Morningpaw added to her father's words.

Featherstar and Mistfall were getting ready for their apprentices to fight. "Start." Featherstar meowed.

Morningpaw and Frogpaw circled each other, Frogpaw seeming more nervous with where she placed her paws. Morningpaw suddenly stopped in her tracks, smirking at Frogpaw. The white-furred she-cat nearly jumped as she stopped, her paws shaking. "Remember what I told you, Frogpaw!" Mistfall shouted.

Right... Stay calm and don't let your opponent know you're afraid.. She thought and took a deep breath in and out. Before she knew it, Morningpaw jumped onto her and wrestled with her before pushing her off. Morningpaw was up on her paws as Frogpaw got up, blushing. *I can't fight Morningpaw!* She thought as the grey-furred

she-cat pounced onto Frogpaw and pinned her. "I got you!" Morningpaw meowed and licked Frogpaw's nose. Mistfall's apprentice froze up in the snow. Her fur felt like it would melt it from feeling so hot.

Morningpaw got off of Frogpaw. "Are you okay?" she asked.

Frogpaw hopped up onto her paws and nodded her head. Then she headed back to the camp. "W-Wait up!" Mistfall called out to her and ran after her.

Featherstar sighed, looking over to Morningpaw. "Splendid job," she meowed.

Morningpaw bounced up and down. "Really?! Thank you!"

"Yep! Let's practice a little more before we head back to camp," Featherstar added, readying herself.

"Yay!" Morningpaw replied, readying herself as well.

*

Shadowpaw padded into the Warriors' den. "Eagleswoop?" he meowed.

Eagleswoop lifted his head and yawned. "Yes?"

"I'm ready to train." the black-furred apprentice mewed.

"Oh, we're not training today, Shadowpaw. So no need to worry!" he mewed back.

Shadowpaw then left the den.

Chapter 19

Shredflash padded through the cold forest. He sighed as he remembered he left Eclipse back at her den while he goes out for a while. As usual, Shred was padding alongside the grey-furred tom. "We have to go visit someone special tonight, Shredflash!" he meowed with a smile across his face.

"Who?" Shredflash meowed back as he continued through the chilly snow.

"Eclipse!"

Shredflash stopped in his tracks and glared at Shred. He seemed furious now. "No."

"Why not?" The eyeless tom questioned.

"I can't look at her the same anymore. Her and Fang betrayed me and left me for Driftclan. If I see them again... I'd-"

"Kill them?" Shred completed his sentence.

Shredflash only stared at Shred for a few heartbeats before responding. "Yes."

"I'll let you see her once it's moonhigh, Shredflash. You'll know what to do once she's in your sights." The eyeless tom meowed.

Shredflash nodded and padded back towards the old Galaxyclan camp. Shred's eyes had not poured with darkness this time. This was something Shredflash wanted.

He wanted his former mate and his daughter dead.

*

"Are you sure you're fine in here by yourself, Eclipse?" the Driftclan medicine cat, Thistlewhisper, meowed to the only queen in the

Nursery.

"Yep! I've told you the last six times, Thistlewhisper, I'm fine!" she meowed back.

"If you say so... But if you need anything, please let me know!" the medicine cat meowed to the black-furred she-cat.

"I will!" Eclipse replied as she watched Thistlewhisper pad out of the den.

Eclipse yawned and placed her head on her paws. She didn't mind being the only cat in the Driftclan Nursery. It was very peaceful now, especially since there are no kits to be loud or bother her.

Not that she hated being bothered by the kits. She just found them a little loud sometimes.

Eclipse was only used to having kit around in the past, her daughter, Fang.

"Now she does clan things with her mate." Eclipse meowed to herself and yawned.

"As long as she's happy!" the black-furred she-cat added and smiled as she closed her eyes and drifted off into sleep.

*

Eclipse.

Eclipse..

Eclipse! Her named echoed loudly as her eyes shot open. "Who's there?!" she yelled. Her meowed echoed back into the darkness and shadows ahead of her. She stood up as she saw a single star in the distance. The star had a dark red color to it. "A red star...?" she questioned as she padded closer and closer to it. Eclipse could hear whispering come from the star. Once she was close enough, another star of the same color appeared right next to it. Her eyes widened once she heard a growl and felt a sudden pain across her chest. She winced, nearly yowling as she looked down and saw blood

dripping.

Eclipse had a claw mark across her chest. She quickly stepped away from the stars.

"Don't step away now, Eclipse." a voice had meowed.

"No!" she yelled as she recognized the voice instantly. "Stay away from me!"

Something moved out of the shadows.

The maroon stars turning into maroon eyes.

It was him.

"I'm afraid I can't do that." it was a grey tom. He moved closer to Eclipse.

"Shredflash... What do you want?" Eclipse's mew shook.

"You left me and took my daughter to Driftclan. Clans are pointless. The cats only care about themselves and no other cat." he meowed back as he stepped closer to his former mate.

"That's a lie! Driftclan cares about all its members! I'm sorry that Vertexclan-"

"Never speak of that rotten clan!" Shredflash cut her off mid-sentence. He padded up to Eclipse and slashed her across the left side of her muzzle with his claws. Eclipse shrieked in pain and stumbled backward. "Vertexclan never cared about me or Dustshine!"

"S-Shredflash, Vertexclan cared for-" She got cut off once more when the grey-furred tom pounced on her and pinned her to the ground.

"*If they cared, then Dustshine would be alive!*" Shredflash yelled back at Eclipse.

Wasting no time anymore, Shredflash cut into Eclipse. Using his

sharpened claws to make deep cuts into her pelt and face. Eclipse yowled for help as she was being attacked by her former mate. But there was no other cat. As Shredflash continued to tear the black-furred she-cat, Eclipse saw an eyeless black tom standing next to Shredflash, smiling down on her as she closed her eyes.

Eclipse could only hear laughing before her eyes shut completely.

*

Nova sighed, "Do you think we must come to the Ocean Side everyday now, Marigoldfur?" she meowed.

Marigoldfur nodded.

"We must be careful, then. I can't lose you too." Nova looked over at the other Vertexclan medicine cat with a serious look.

"You won't, Nova." Marigoldfur meowed back, giving a slight smile.

Nova smiled back and stared off into the distance of ice as the sun slowly sunk under it.

Chapter 20

"Fang, I'm trying to sleep." Shadowpaw meowed to his mother and yawned.

"Come on, Shadowpaw! It's good to see all of your kin once in a while!" Fang replied, smiling.

"Fine..." Shadowpaw let out a sigh and got up onto his paws, stretching himself out. He hasn't spoken to Eclipse much, even when he was in the Nursery.

Once he finished stretching, he looked up at his mother, who smiled at him. Shadowpaw couldn't help but give a tiny smile back at his mother. Which made her smile wider. "Ready to go?" Fang meowed.

Shadowpaw nodded.

Fang turned around and padded out of the Apprentices' den, her son right on her tail. As the two cats made their way across the camp and over to the Nursery, another cat padded in front of the two. It was Morningpaw. She had her wide smile across her face, which caused Shadowpaw to sigh in annoyance. "Hi!" she happily mewed to her mother and brother.

"Hi, Morningpaw!" Fang replied with a smile.

Shadowpaw nodded his head in repose to Morningpaw and gave a grunt.

"Where are you two going?" she asked.

"We're about to see Eclipse!" Fang meowed back to her kit.

"Can I come?" Morningpaw mewed.

"Yeah!" Fang smiled and continued padding towards the Nursery.

Both Shadowpaw and Morningpaw followed behind. A few

heartbeats later, Fang was the first to pad into the Nursery, "Hey, Eclipse-" her eyes widened once she saw the sight in front of her eyes. "*Eclipse!*" Fang yelled and ran over to her mother.

Shadowpaw was the next one to pad into the Nursery, confused by why Fang had yelled. "What happened?" the black-furred tom's eyes widened once he noticed Eclipse.

Morningpaw noticed her brother standing at the entrance of the Nursery. "What's wrong?" she mewed and quickly headed over to Shadowpaw.

Morningpaw couldn't believe what she was seeing.

There lied Eclipse in cold blood. She had deep cuts all over her face and body. Blood got dried on the sides of her maw.

"No!" Morningpaw ran over to Eclipse and lied next to her, tears falling down her face.

Shadowpaw watched both Fang and Morningpaw stay next to Eclipse. He didn't know how to feel or what to say. Shadowpaw has never seen something like this before. It made him angry to see his kin so upset, since they are always happy and smiling.

The black-furred tom ended up confused, angry, and sad.

*

Morningpaw lied in her nest in the Apprentices' den. She was holding back tears as she thought about Eclipse. The fluffy and grey-furred she-cat was at the Ocean Side with her mother and littermate. She didn't want to sit the vigil for long, because she didn't want to have thoughts about Eclipse under the snow and sand. Morningpaw then looked up to see Shadowpaw staring down at her. The black-furred apprentice showed no emotion. Shadowpaw then sighed and lied next to his sister, nuzzling her. "It's okay, Morningpaw. Eclipse is with Starclan now," he meowed.

Morningpaw nuzzled her brother back, but did not respond.

Shadowpaw sighed once more and stayed quiet.

A few heartbeats later, Morningpaw meowed. "Shadowpaw?"

"Yeah?" he mewed back.

"Do you think this has to do with the prophecy we were told moons ago?" the she-cat asked.

"I don't know. I barely remember what that cat said anyway..." Shadowpaw licked his chest fur.

"The morning's shadow will stop the shred once and for all..." she said, staring off to the outside of the Apprentices' den. "The prophecy has to do with the two of us... Why else would that cat tell us only?" Morningpaw questioned.

Shadowpaw shrugged. "If it does." he started. "Who would be the "shred" we'd have to stop?" he meowed.

"I don't know... We should ask Mistfall! Maybe he'll know.." she said.

"We must ask him later, then. He's at the Ocean Side with Fang." Shadowpaw yawned.

"R-Right..." Morningpaw's mew shook after being reminded of Eclipse's death.

Shadowpaw licked his sister's cheek before lying his head on his paws and closing his eyes. Morningpaw sighed, still frowning. She then felt another warmth sit beside her. She looked to her left to see Frogpaw with a warm smile on her face. Morningpaw smiled back and licked Frogpaw on the nose. That caused Frogpaw's smile to widen. "I'm here for you, Morningpaw," she meowed.

"Thank you, Frogpaw." she meowed back and lied her head on the white and silver-furred she-cat's shoulder.

Chapter 21

I don't want to go to sleep.

I don't want to go to sleep.

Lionstrike is going to hurt me again... Why would he do that to me? Are mentors supposed to do that to their apprentices? I look down at the claw marks I had on my paws. There were more all over my body, covered with cobwebs, since I visited Nova in the medicine den. She asked me if Lionstrike had anything to do with this.

I said no, because I didn't want to get in trouble.

I lied in my nest in the Apprentices' den and sighed, wincing a little as I felt the pain coming from my back. "Well, look who it is," I heard a meow in front of me.

I knew who it was, too.

"Hi, Breezepaw..." I meowed and sighed.

"Did Lionstrike play too rough with you, Sunpaw? Did you fall off a rock?" my sister meowed.

I felt anger rise in me.

I wanted her to stop meowing to me.

Jumppaw only stood next to her and laughed.

"You're the worst apprentice to ever-"

I then stood up and unsheathed my claws. I scratched my sister in the eye, causing it to bleed. She shrieked in pain and stumbled backwards. "Leave me alone!" I shouted and hissed. My fur was standing on end as I glared at Jumppaw, who now had a frightened look on her face.

"You better leave *before I hurt you more!*" I hissed and spat at my littermates.

Both Breezepaw and Jumppaw scurried out of the den. Both with looks of fear on their faces. I looked down at my right claws to see the red substance stained on them. I slowly looked at the entrance of the den to see Lionstrike standing there, his gaze locked onto me.

"Excellent job." he meowed and padded out.

My anger changed into sadness as I realized I hurt my kin.

I frowned and lied into my nest.

How could I do this? Emberfoot will be mad at me... I don't want to be like Lionstrike...

I lied my head onto my paws as tears fell from my eyes.

I don't want to hurt any cat ever again...

*

I watched as my apprentice, Sunpaw, fell onto her back. I pinned her and hissed. "Do better! You'll beat no opponent if you're weak!" I said, then dug a claw into her forehead.

I only dug it in a little, then I slowly drug it down, causing Sunpaw to screech in pain. Her screams and cries bothered me before, but then as the moons passed, it didn't phase me.

"Lionstrike, stop for a bit and get off of her, please!" I heard Shred meow next to me.

I got off of Sunpaw. She was slowly stirring up. The wounds she received from me before opened up again.

Nova is going to question me. I thought, then sighed.

As Sunpaw shakily stood up, Shred only stared into her eyes. A few heartbeats later, something changed in my apprentices' look. Sunpaw looked away from Shred and looked at me, baring her teeth

and charging at me. *Seems like she's ready to fight for real now.* I thought, moving to the side as she pounced at me with her claws unsheathed. Sunpaw growled and pounced at me. But I soon rammed my head into her belly, causing her to fall backwards once more. I padded up to her, and she only lied on the ground, catching her breath. "You need to be faster." I meowed and lashed my tail.

Sunpaw only looked up at me, huffing.

"Amazing job, you two!" Shred meowed and smiled.

I sat on my haunches, then sighed.

It won't be too long until you're mine once more, Ripplewave.

*

Shredflash's eyes shot open. He was standing in front of Shred.

Shredflash could only assume one thing.

"Who's next?" Shredflash meowed, not wanting to waste any time.

Shred's usual smile formed into a wide one. "Quick with it now, eh?" the eyeless tom meowed back.

The grey tom sighed, "Just show me who's next."

A light then appeared in front of him. It widened and showed two cats at the Ocean Side. They seemed like they were training. "It's Featherstar and an apprentice, I'm guessing." Shredflash started. "Is it Featherstar that I'm after now?" he asked.

Shred shook his head.

"I see," the grey-furred tom replied. "When are we going there?" he asked.

Now!

*

Shredflash jolted awake, Aurora still next to him. He got up and

stretched himself out, then turned to the she-cat. "Aurora, we're going somewhere."

"Yes, Shredflash." she replied to him and got up.

The grey tom then headed out of the den with Aurora right on his tail.

His next target was that grey-furred apprentice.

Chapter 22

Mistfall padded away from Driftclan camp. He knew where his mate was, and he was going to go comfort her the best he could. Mistfall knew Fang was close to her mother. He could feel how much it hurt when she saw her mothers' stiff body lying on the ground in the Nursery. A few heartbeats later, Mistfall made it to the Ocean Side, where Fang was looking off into the distance of ice. The sun was still floating over the ice as Mistfall padded through the snow and over to his mate. The tawny and grey tom could feel the chilly snow between his toes as he sat down next to the black-furred she-cat. Fang turned her head and stared into Mistfall's eyes with sadness. Mistfall licked Fang's cheek and smiled. "It'll be okay, Fang! I'm here for you and all of Driftclan is here for you. And Eclipse is watching over you in a better place now! We'll get through this together!" he meowed.

Tears had welled up in Fang's eyes as they then fell down the sides of her cheeks. She shuffled herself closer to Mistfall and touched noses with him. "Thank you, Mistfall... I love you so much!" she meowed.

Mistfall purred as he touched noses with his mate. "I love you more, Fang!"

"I never want to leave your side, my love." Fang purred.

"I never want to leave yours either!" Mistfall licked Fang's cheek and placed his head on her shoulder.

*

I sat next to Shadowpaw in the Apprentices' den. I licked his cheek now and then, because I felt sad for him. It didn't seem like he was close to Eclipse, but he spoke to her a lot in the Nursery. Even if he was sleep most of the time... Or at least I think he was. I could never tell, because you know, I don't have my eyesight. But that's okay! As long as I can track Shadowpaw's scent, I'll be fine!

I know I have to track other scents too, but I'm around Shadowpaw a lot, okay?!

"I have to go train with Eagleswoop soon." Shadowpaw meowed from the left side of me.

I looked the way he spoke from and licked his cheek again. "You don't have to train, Shadowpaw! Featherstar said you could take a break for a while if you needed it!" I mewed.

Shadowpaw grunted. "I'll be fine."

"Are you sure? You can always talk to me if you need to..." I replied, frowning.

"I'm always sure." he said, then moved from his spot next to me.

I could only guess that he was standing now. Ready to leave the apprentices' den.

"I'm here for you, Shadowpaw." I meowed.

"Thanks." he replied. I then heard pawsteps move away from me.

He left the den.

I hope to Starclan he'll be alright.

*

Why did I go? I could've stayed in the den with Adderpaw and went to sleep.

I need to get stronger, though.

I stood in the snow as I stared at Drizzlepaw from across. She seemed worried. "Don't worry, Drizzlepaw, you got this!" I heard Hollowcreek yell from the other side.

I felt anger rise in me. I just wanted to fight now.

Hesitating no further, I unsheathed my claws and ran on the snow covered sand towards Drizzlepaw and she ran towards me.

Unfortunately for her, I got the upper-paw and quickly tacked her and pinned her to the snow. The anger that was in me had gotten higher. My claws dug deep into Drizzlepaw's shoulders as I hissed at her. I heard as she shrieked in pain.

I didn't stop, though.

I was so angry.

I couldn't hold in my anger anymore.

I dug my claws deeper and deeper into Drizzlepaw's shoulders. She screeched louder and louder. I soon felt myself being pulled off of Drizzlepaw. I flailed my paws around. "Let me go!" I shouted.

"C-Calm down, Shadowpaw!" My mentor's voice echoed in my ears as tears fell from my eyes.

Why did Eclipse have to go?

Chapter 23

"I told you, they made me mad, that's it!" I shouted at Nova in the medicine den.

"Sunpaw... Please keep your meow down," she replied, sighing.

"I *am* keeping it down!" I shouted once more.

"P-Please calm down, Sunpaw..." I heard Marigoldfur mew next to her. The golden-furred she-cat was tending to the injury I gave to Breezepaw.

Or at least I think she was.

I don't care, Breezepaw deserved that from me.

I looked over at my sister. She saw me looking at her and glanced away, not wanting to meet my gaze. *What a gull-brain.* I thought, looking back up at Nova. The medicine stared back at me with a serious look. "Sunpaw, if there's something going on, you can tell me." She meowed, lashing her tail.

"Nothing's wrong, now can you leave me alone and let me go back to Lionstrike?" I meowed back, nearly hissing in annoyance.

Nova only stared for a moment before sighing. "Yes."

I looked at Breezepaw and smirked.

I'll do it again! And again! And again!

I'll make her feel as much pain as possible.

I padded out of the medicine den, looking for Lionstrike now. I hoped we could train more soon, because I want to fight more! I want to do much more with Lionstrike and Shred. I want to do anything I can to get stronger and make sure nothing is in my way!

I'll be the best warrior in Vertexclan!

*

Shredflash trudged through the snow and past the leafless tress. Shred was close by, but when wasn't he? "I hope you're ready, Shredflash!" the eyeless tom mewed.

"I'm always ready. I'll be able to rid of this cat quick." he meowed.

"Good!" Shred replied.

"Are there any others after this?" the grey tom asked.

"Maybe!" Shred calmly padded alongside Shredflash.

Shredflash sighed and looked around to see a vast of the white fluffy substance. He then looked straight ahead as he continued his way towards the Ocean Side.

Chapter 24

I turned myself many times before stopping. Sandcoat told me he was taking me outside of Driftclan's camp, so I followed his scent until I bumped into his rear again.

It's not like I'm blind or anything.

I'm just blind.

"Do you know what we'll be doing, Adderpaw?" I heard Sandcoat's meow get closer to my face.

"Nope." I replied.

"We'll be hunting!" He said.

"We'll be *what?!*" My mew shook.

"Hunting!"

I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

Did he just tell me we were going to hunt?

Does he know I'm blind?

"Do you know that I'm blind, Sandcoat?" I meowed to him.

"Yes, I do."

I sighed. This *won't* end well at all.

"Don't worry, Adderpaw! As long as you use the skills I've taught you, you'll be an excellent hunter!" My mentor meowed.

I smiled and hoped I wasn't facing the wrong way, because I wanted him to see it. Sandcoat's words of encouragement always made me feel better about myself. Sandcoat is an excellent mentor. If it

wasn't for him, I would've given up a long time ago. Because of Sandcoat, I want to mentor an apprentice one day.

I want to be just like him.

"Are you ready to start?" Sandcoat mewed.

I nodded. "Yep!"

"Great! Now, I want you to take a few pawsteps forward and listen to the surrounding sounds." my mentor ordered.

I did as instructed and took a few steps forward, thinking I would bump into Sandcoat again, but I didn't. I could hear the snow crunching beneath my paws as I stopped in my tracks. *Cold, but no surprise there...* I thought as my ears perked up. I felt and heard the chilly breeze pass through my pelt. I listened closely for anything nearby.

"Take a few slow steps around if you need to!" Sandcoat whispered.

And with that, I did.

I moved forward only a few steps, stopping once I heard something next to me. *Is it in a bush or something...?* I thought and slowly turned myself towards the noise.

"Now, if you're sure that's prey, crouch down and lift your tail!" my mentor whispered.

I did as I was told and slowly crouched down. I had my eyes closed and I know that doesn't matter to me, but it was like I could see the outline of something... Something that was there... And I knew it was there too.

"Once it's close enough, then strike."

I'm surprised it hasn't scurried away yet.

I sniffed the cold air and caught the scent of the prey. The outline seemed more clear now. I think.

The scent of the prey got closer to my nose. I unsheathed my claws and waited for the prey to get closer than it was before. I gave the chilly air a gentle sniff as I felt something brush against my nose. Once I felt it, I could only assume it was the prey. I swiped my paw against it, feeling my claws dig into some fur and flesh, then come back out. "Adderpaw!", I heard my mentor yell close-by.

"H-Huh? Did I do something wrong...?" I mewed.

"Not at all!" I heard pawsteps come close to me and then stop. Sandcoat was closer.

"Did I get it?" I asked.

"Yes, you did! I'm proud of you!" my mentor meowed happily.

"I did!" I said and hopped up and down in the snow like a kit.

I can't believe I did it! I don't know how, but I'm happy!

"I'm going to tell Ripplewave all about this!" I said to Sandcoat.

"Sounds like a plan, but you must practice for a while longer before we go back." He replied.

"Okay!" I said, my tail swaying.

"For now, dig up some snow and bury your prey to it. We'll come back for it later once we hunt for longer!" Sandcoat mewed to me.

I sniffed for my prey on the snow. Once I had found it, I swiped some snow away with my paws, which I had sheathed, then picked up the prey. It took me a few heartbeats before I placed my catch down and covered it with the snow. "Ready to continue?" Sandcoat asked.

I nodded. "Yep!"

*

"Are you two ready?" Featherstar meowed to Frogpaw and I.

I looked at Frogpaw. She seemed frightened by swimming in the water!

My mentor, Featherstar, and Frogpaw's mentor, Mistfall, had taken us to the Ocean Side to swim. Isn't that exciting? "I'm always ready, Featherstar!" I meowed proudly.

"How about you, Frogpaw?" Featherstar said to her.

Frogpaw shook her head, "What if I sink...?" she mewed.

I watched Mistfall pad over to his apprentice and smile, "Don't worry, Frogpaw, you won't sink! Just keep pulling your paws towards you and don't be afraid at all!" my father meowed back to Frogpaw.

"And I'll be here to help if you need it!" I added with a smile.

Frogpaw looked away from Mistfall and looked at me. She gave a small smile.

Frogpaw's smile is wonderful!

"We're lucky there's an open spot in the ocean to swim in." Featherstar started. "Now, Morningpaw, you head in first, then you right after, Frogpaw." she meowed.

"Okay!" I padded through the snow and slowly into the chilly water.

It was freezing as I felt more and more water touch my fur. I soon couldn't feel anything holding my paws up as I pulled them out of the water and pulled them towards me. Soon I noticed I was...

I was swimming!

The water is freezing, though!

I turned my head to see Frogpaw also in the water. But she seemed like she was having trouble. I've never seen her so frightened until now. "I got you, Frogpaw!" I moved my paws around so I could turn to her. Then I began swimming towards her. In a few heartbeats, I was next to her. She looked at me with the same look that she had

when we first started. "Calm down, Frogpaw." I mewed softly in her ear.

Frogpaw had flailed around for a while until I came to her side. "Now, move your paws like this!" I took my paws out of the water and pulled them forward to make myself move. I turned around and watched Frogpaw mimic my actions.

She was swimming! I'm so proud of her!

"Now keep doing that until you get to where I am and then turn around!" I meowed and continued swimming forward through the cold water.

I turned around and swam back towards our mentors. Frogpaw was close behind. She seemed less afraid now and more confident! A few heartbeats later, I made it back to shore, panting a little as I shook my fur. It felt like it would freeze over! Soon, Frogpaw quickly came onto the shore. Once she did, I nuzzled her. "You did it, Frogpaw! You swam!" I exclaimed.

Mistfall padded up to us. "Yeah! I'm so proud of you, Frogpaw!" he purred.

My mentor, Featherstar, soon padded up. "And I'm proud of you, Morningpaw."

"As am I! My wonderful daughter!" Mistfall added.

I gave a wide smile to both of them.

I love Driftclan!

*

I hurt a clanmate again.

I didn't mean to.

I let my anger get the best of me.

How could I do such a thing?

"I don't deserve to be a warrior of Driftclan..." I mewed out loud.

"That's not true, Shadowpaw!" I looked up to see Eagleswoop. Tears were falling down my face.

I don't enjoy crying.

He quickly padded over to me.

"I hurt Drizzlepaw." I mewed.

"I'm sure you didn't mean to, did you?" he asked.

I shook my head in response.

"Then it's all fine! Thistlewhisper and Drizzlepaw both understand that Eclipse's passing upset you. I should have had us take a break instead of train..." Eagleswoop lied down next to me.

As my mentor lied next to me, I pressed my muzzled into his fur, letting out more tears. "I just miss her so much, Eagleswoop... She's my kin... Fang was so sad to see her go... Seeing Fang so sad just angered me..." I mewed.

I felt Eagleswoop nuzzle me and his tail go down along my back. It surprised me he was even doing this.

I'm such a terrible clanmate.

"Sh... It's okay, Shadowpaw. She's in a better place now." Eagleswoop meowed.

I calmed down.

I'm glad that I have Eagleswoop. I'm surprised that he can even deal with me.

He's a great mentor, though.

Chapter 25

"Sunpaw."

"Sunpaw, wake up."

Sunpaw's head shot up. She looked up to see Lionstrike staring down at her. "What do you want?"

Lionstrike unsheathed his claws and scratched her across the cheek. "Don't speak to me like that," he growled.

Sunpaw gave a low hiss, but listened.

"You'll be fighting your sister, Jumppaw, soon." He meowed.

"I don't want to fight a weak cat! Can I fight a warrior?" Sunpaw meowed back.

"No, the only warrior you'll fight for now is me." Lionstrike said.

"But I want to prove to them I'm the best warrior of Vertexclan!" the apprentice exclaimed and puffed out her chest.

"You can do that later. We have to go do this now, because later I won't want to." the Vertexclan warrior meowed.

Sunpaw sighed and stood up. Then she stretched and shook her fur. The Apprentices' den was cold. Her mentor had turned around and padded out of the den with her on his tail. Outside of the den. They padded into the chilly snow. Lionstrike and Sunpaw came up to two other Vertexclan cats: Rainpad and his apprentice, Jumppaw.

She's already shaking from looking at me! Sunpaw thought as she looked at her sister, who quickly looked away and at the ground. "Are you ready to go?" Lionstrike asked Rainpad.

Rainpad nodded and nudged Jumppaw. She nearly jumped at him, nudging her. He motioned his head that they were going now, then

he padded towards the entrance of camp. Lionstrike and Sunpaw followed behind. A smirk crept across Sunpaw's face as the four cats left camp and headed somewhere else.

*

Lionstrike took a deep breath in and then out. He and Sunpaw followed Rainpad and Jumppaw out to the middle of Driftclan and Vertexclan territories. "Are you two ready?" Lionstrike asked the apprentices.

"Yes!" Sunpaw meowed excitedly.

Jumppaw gave a worried nod.

"Then go." Lionstrike replied.

Sunpaw started by crouching slightly and slowly circling her sister. Jumppaw was frightened, but she did her best to prepare for what Sunpaw would do next. The ginger-furred she-cat then stopped in her tracks, making a crunch sound in the snow. Jumppaw then lunged at her sister, but Sunpaw moved out of the way in time, causing Jumppaw to skid in the snow and nearly fall over. Jumppaw whipped around only for Sunpaw to ram her head into her sister's nose. Sunpaw's littermate stumbled back as blood dripped from her nostrils. Rainpad was going to intervene once he saw his apprentice bleed, but Lionstrike stopped him. "Let them be for now, Rainpad," he mewed.

With a worried look, Rainpad sat down once more and watched his apprentice fight. Jumppaw charged towards Sunpaw and lunged at her again, but Sunpaw lunged, clashing with her sister, but ended up pinning her. "You're so weak!" Sunpaw shouted into her sister's ear.

"N-No, I'm not!" Jumppaw pushed Sunpaw off of her and to the side. Sunpaw landed in the snow, but quickly got up soon after.

Sunpaw growled. "You'll never do that again!" she unsheathed her claws and ran towards Jumppaw.

Jumppaw moved to dodge Sunpaw's attack, but it was no use.

Sunpaw scratched her sister's front leg, causing her to screech in pain. Rainpad then got up and ran over to his apprentice. But once he made it over, Sunpaw was then deeply biting into the leg that she had scratched, making Jumppaw screech louder. "Sunpaw. Get off," Rainpad meowed.

"No! She's weak! She deserves this!" Sunpaw hissed.

Rainpad then tackled Sunpaw off of Jumppaw. "What you were doing is not okay."

"Get off of me!" Sunpaw yelled.

Lionstrike sighed, "Sunpaw, calm yourself, it's over now." he meowed.

Rainpad got off of Sunpaw and went over to Jumppaw. He signaled with his tail for Lionstrike to come over. "Get her onto my back." Rainpad mewed as Lionstrike stood next to him.

Once Jumppaw was on Rainpad's back, he immediately headed back to the Vertexclan camp.

Lionstrike and Sunpaw followed behind.

*

I waited outside the medicine den.

I had told Skystar of the incident that happened between my apprentice and Lionstrike's apprentice.

Hopefully, Skystar is doing something about this.

I just want Jumppaw to be okay. So I padded inside the den myself. I was looking down at first when I entered, but then looked up.

I was now muzzle to muzzle with Marigoldfur.

My fur felt hot as I stepped back to give her space. "How's Jumppaw?" I meowed.

"Sh-She's just fine..." Marigoldfur started, "But she'll be in the medicine den for now.." she mewed.

"Okay, thank you." I replied, sighing as I turned to leave the medicine den.

My heart raced.

I thought I got over Marigoldfur.

*

I padded through the snow for longer, past some snow-covered trees and bushes. Until I saw the open area and the vast amount of water, which was now ice. "We've made it, Shredflash!" I heard Shred meow.

I nodded in response as I padded out onto the snow covered sand.

It's been a while since I've been at the Ocean Side.

My ears perk up as I hear meows from other cats. I snapped my head to the left to see who they were.

I recognized Featherstar.

The cat next to her was...

"The cat you have to kill!" Shred said happily.

I nodded.

"Let's get to it then!" The eyeless tom mewed.

As snow slowly fell onto the Ocean Side, I slowly and steadily padded over to the two cats.

Chapter 26

Shadowpaw lied in the Apprentices' den. He shivered as he could feel the chilly air come inside of the den. He wondered what Adderpaw was doing. I *want her to be next to me, it's so cold.* He thought, then shivered. Shadowpaw looked around the den. Few apprentices were in here with him, because the rest were out with their mentors. Frogpaw and Avalanchepaw were the only other two in the den with him. Eagleswoop told him they would take a break, because of what happened during his battle training. *I guess a break is for the best...* Shadowpaw thought and let out a sigh as he looked around the den once more. A few heartbeats later, Shadowpaw lied his head onto his paws and closed his eyes. *I guess I can sleep.* He thought. Shadowpaw nearly fell asleep until he heard a loud "Shadowpaw!" come from the entrance of the den. The black-furred apprentice nearly jumped up in his nest as he looked at the entrance to see his mentor, Eagleswoop, standing there. *Just when I thought I could sleep...* Shadowpaw sighed. The dark cream-furred tom then smiled and padded over to his apprentice. He then lied down next to him. "How's it going?" he meowed.

"I was just about to sleep until you came in here." Shadowpaw replied.

"O-Oh, sorry!" Eagleswoop gave a nervous smile.

"It's okay. I'm okay with you waking me up." Shadowpaw meowed back to his mentor.

"I have an idea!" the Driftclan warrior meowed.

"Hm?"

"We can rest right now!" Eagleswoop mewed.

"Are you sure, Eagleswoop?" Shadowpaw started. "Wouldn't Featherstar or Sandcoat have things for you to do...?"

"Maybe! But I'm sure they wouldn't mind me taking a cat nap!" Eagleswoop said.

"If you say so," Shadowpaw lied his head back onto his paws, yawning.

His mentor followed and lied his own head onto his paws. "I'll see you when we wake up!" He meowed and closed his eyes.

Shadowpaw smiled and closed his eyes.

Eagleswoop is the best mentor ever.

*

Drizzlepaw was panting as her paws dug into the snow. "It's okay, Drizzlepaw! I'm sure you'll catch one next time!" Hollowcreek meowed.

That's what you said last time... Drizzlepaw thought and frowned. Shadowpaw had recently attacked the white and cream-furred apprentice. Her shoulders were still hurting from her battle with the other apprentice. *I thought I was bad at hunting before, but now I'm even worse!* Drizzlepaw sighed. "Cheer up, Drizzlepaw!"

"I can't. I've been training for moons and I've made no progress since we've first started!" Drizzlepaw stared at the snow.

Hollowcreek had no words for her apprentice. She frowned as she felt bad for Drizzlepaw. The apprentice then looked at her mentor. "I know what I want to do now, Hollowcreek."

"Huh?"

"I want to become a medicine cat." Drizzlepaw meowed.

"Oh! Well, that's okay! We can go speak to Thistlewhisper about it right now." Hollowcreek replied with a smile.

"Great! I hope you're not mad at me though..."

"Why would I be mad?"

"Because you seemed so excited about having an apprentice, and I feel like I'm taking that away from you." Drizzlepaw said.

"Oh, don't worry about that, Drizzlepaw! There will be more apprentices!" Hollowcreek mewed.

"Okay!" Drizzlepaw's frown turned into a smile.

"Are you ready to head back to the camp now?" Hollowcreek asked.

"Yep!" Drizzlepaw replied.

Hollowcreek then padded back to Driftclan camp with her apprentice right on her tail.

*

"The ice will forever look pretty!" Morningpaw mewed excitedly as her eyes glittered.

"It will, Morningpaw," Featherstar, her mentor, replied and let out a small purr. She enjoyed times where she didn't have to train or do anything as a leader. She enjoyed spending time with those close to her.

Morningpaw then looked at Featherstar. "Do you think I could be the leader of Driftclan one day?" she asked with a curious look.

Featherstar chuckled. "With enough hard work, I'm positive that you can!" the Driftclan leader mewed to her apprentice.

"Yay! That means everything to me, Featherstar!" Morningpaw purred, looking down to the right of the Ocean Side.

"I'm glad!"

Morningpaw tilted her head. "Featherstar?"

"Yes?"

"Who is that cat down there? Are they from Vertexclan?" Morningpaw questioned.

"What cat?" Featherstar then followed Morningpaw's gaze.

Soon, she saw the familiar face of a tom.

The tom that killed Shellstar.

"Morningpaw, *run*."

Chapter 27

"Lionstrike!" the Vertexclan warrior heard his name, but he couldn't tell who it was.

"Lionstrike, wake up!" the voice echoed as he slowly opened his green eyes.

"What?" he yawned, looking up to see the Vertexclan deputy, Buzzardgaze.

"It's Skystar. He wants to speak with you!" the deputy meowed, lashing his tail.

"Can that wait? I'm sleeping." Lionstrike lied his head onto his paws.

"Nope!"

Lionstrike groaned and got up onto his paws. He didn't want to speak with Skystar at all. What he wanted to do was practice with Sunpaw and Shred again. *Then again, I don't even know if Sunpaw is sleeping.* He thought as he followed Buzzardgaze out of the den and over to Skystar's den. *Sunpaw's been doing well in her training, though. She'll be an excellent warrior, and I can tell Ripplewave about how I trained Sunpaw to be so great.* The Vertexclan warrior thought and gave a small smile at the thought of Ripplewave. "Come on, Lionstrike!" Buzzardgaze snapped him out of his thoughts by meowing as he padded into the den, Lionstrike following behind.

"Here he is, Skystar!" Buzzardgaze mewed and smiled at his leader, stepping aside so Lionstrike could pad in.

"Thank you, Buzzardgaze." the Vertexclan leader replied, smiling back.

"Anytime!" the grey-furred tom happily padded out of the den, leaving Lionstrike with Skystar.

"What do you want?" Lionstrike questioned.

Skystar sighed. "Why did you allow Sunpaw to hurt Jumppaw?"

"They were only training, Skystar. Sunpaw got the advantage and won the battle." Lionstrike replied.

"Sunpaw shouldn't be hurting her clanmates. Training should never go that far. Do you understand, Lionstrike?" Skystar meowed sternly.

"It's Rainpad's fault for training his apprentice to be so-" He was then cut off by his leader.

"I said, *do you understand, Lionstrike?*" Skystar meowed.

Lionstrike felt anger well up inside him. "Yes, Skystar." he nearly hissed.

"You may go back to what you were doing before."

Lionstrike turned around and stormed out of Skystar's den. *Who does he think he is? Bossing me around. I don't care if he's my leader!* Lionstrike thought as he padded back into the Warriors' den. He plopped down into his nest. *I'd be a better leader than Skystar!* He thought and nearly hissed at the thought of the tall and grey-furred tom. Lionstrike then sighed once more before he thought of Ripplewave again.

Soon...

*

"Morningpaw, run!" Shredflash heard Featherstar meow to the cat next to her.

"You can't let them do that, Shredflash!" Shred meowed.

Shredflash glared at Morningpaw, who froze in fear. His eyes then set on Featherstar as the Driftclan leader padded in front of Morningpaw. "I'll let you nowhere near her!" she meowed.

"I'll only say this once, Featherstar. I'm not here for you. I'm here for that apprentice." Shredflash replied.

Featherstar hissed at the grey tom. "And I'll say *this* again, I'll let you *nowhere* near her!" she then turned to Morningpaw. "I told you to run!"

Morningpaw then quickly turned and ran away from the two. Shredflash unsheathed his claws and tried running after Morningpaw, but Featherstar got in his way once more. Shredflash sighed as he lunged at her and scratched her across the cheek. Featherstar retaliated with a scratch to Shredflash's muzzle, which caused him to stumble backward. Featherstar stood her ground. "Use the snow to your advantage, Shredflash!" Shred mewed.

Shredflash then looked at his paws and then back at the Driftclan leader. He then moved his front right paw upwards as he flicked some snow and sand at Featherstar. She hissed as sand and snow got in her eyes. She nearly fell over. Shredflash took this chance to lunge at her and pin her. Digging his claws into her forehead. "I told you not to get in my way."

Featherstar shrieked in pain.

*

I have to tell another cat!

I was running back towards Driftclan camp until I heard something. *That sounds like Featherstar!* I thought, stopping in my tracks. I turned around and saw her being attacked by that cat! "I have to go help Featherstar..." I whispered.

I should go tell the clan first...

I looked toward Driftclan, then back at the cat and Featherstar.

I started running as I now knew what I had to do.

*

Shredflash dug his claws deeper into Featherstar's head. "Now you'll pay the price."

The Driftclan leader was struggling to get up.

"Hey!" a voice shouted.

Shredflash looked up to see Morningpaw running towards him. *She shouldn't've come back.* Shredflash thought. Before he could do anything, the apprentice lunged and knocked the grey-furred tom off of Featherstar. Shredflash quickly got up and looked at Morningpaw. The grey she-cat nudged her leader. "Featherstar... Please get up..."

"G-Go, Morningpaw!" Featherstar meowed as she stirred up.

"Won't you fight for your leader, Morningpaw? Won't you fight for your clan instead of running away?" Shredflash spoke up.

Morningpaw slowly looked at Shredflash. "I will!" she meowed, then turned herself to him.

"Too bad this will be the end for her!" Shred mewed.

Shredflash watched as Morningpaw unsheathed her claws. "Why are you attacking us?!" she yelled.

"Both Driftclan and Vertexclan deserve to rot and die." Shredflash replied.

"What are you meowing about?!"

"I don't have to answer to you, apprentice. If you are going to fight me, then come at me."

Morningpaw growled. "I'll stop you from harming anymore cats!"

This is too familiar to me. I don't know why. Shredflash thought as Morningpaw jumped at him once more. The Driftclan apprentice clawed at Shredflash's chest, causing blood to dribble down his fur. She then scratched the side of his muzzle, making him wince.

Shredflash didn't move at all.

"I'll stop you!" the apprentice yelled.

Shredflash sighed as he rammed his head into Morningpaw's nose,

causing her to stumble back.

Morningpaw looked at Shredflash again. Blood was dripping from her nose. "I'm not scared of you!" she hissed.

Shredflash looked at Featherstar. She wasn't moving.

"We have to end this now, Shredflash! Before that leader gets up!" Shred said.

The grey-furred tom looked back at Morningpaw, who ran towards him again. Shredflash sighed and turned his body towards her. She lunged at him again, but this time Shredflash scratched her on the side of her muzzle, causing her to shriek in pain. Shredflash then stepped closer to her and continued to claw at her face, leaving deep claw marks and blood falling into the snow. Shredflash continued on, clawing at her chest now. Shredflash growled as he pounced and pinned Morningpaw. "Why did you fight me? You could've got your clan to help."

Morningpaw coughed up blood as she meowed. "I fought for my clan! I-I'll do anything to protect them..."

Shredflash noticed tears falling from the apprentice's eyes.

End it, Shredflash. Shred echoed in his mind.

The grey-furred tom stood there for a moment before he bit down onto Morningpaw's neck. Pressing his teeth into her fur and soon her flesh. The Driftclan apprentice struggled to move before her life slowly drained from her. *Just die already...* Shredflash thought as Morningpaw coughed up blood. "Stop struggling!" He meowed through her fur and pressed his teeth in more, tasting her blood on his tongue.

Shredflash noticed a smile come across Morningpaw's face. It soon faded away as her eyes rolled into the back of her head and blood spilled out of her maw and onto the snow.

Morningpaw was dead.

Shredflash removed his teeth from the apprentice's fur. He got off of

her and looked back at Featherstar.

She began stirring up.

"She lost a life, Shredflash! We have to go now!" Shred exclaimed.

Shredflash turned around and ran off.

Scarlet stained snow. Shredflash thought.

*

"I'm going to be a warrior!" Sunpaw mewed.

"Your assessment still needs to happen, Sunpaw." Lionstrike replied.

"I know, but I'm just ready to rid of those weak cats in my way!" She smirked.

"You will soon, Sunpaw!" Shred mewed back.

"When will Ripplewave see me?" Lionstrike asked the eyeless tom.

"Well, you must become the leader of Vertexclan first!" Shred said.

"What?!" Lionstrike and Sunpaw meowed in unison.

Shred nodded.

"There's already a deputy." Lionstrike meowed.

"Just kill him!" Shred suggested.

Sunpaw hopped up and down like a kit wanting to play a game. "Yeah, we'll kill Buzzardgaze!"

"How?" Lionstrike seemed confused.

"Once Sunpaw becomes a warrior, she'll go somewhere with Buzzardgaze, then she'll use what she learned in her training and kill him!" Shred's tail swayed.

"What if there are suspicions?"

"Just say I did it."

The three cats turned to the shadows to see maroon eyes glow. A cat then steps out of the shadows, a tom. His fur was grey, and he had black paws. "Hi, Shredflash!" Shred mewed to the tom.

"Shredflash?!" Lionstrike's eyes widened.

Shredflash nodded.

"Who's Shredflash?" Sunpaw meowed.

"Your new friend!" Shred replied.

Shredflash sat down and looked at Lionstrike and Sunpaw. "You are both from my clan."

"You used to live in Vertexclan?" Sunpaw tilted her head to the side.

"I'll explain later!" Shred said. "For now, we'll take action after Sunpaw becomes a warrior, okay?"

Every cat nodded.

Chapter 28

Featherstar jolted awake and hopped up onto her paws. She looked around to see that she was in a starry lit area. "Morningpaw!" she meowed. "Where is she?"

"Calm down, Featherstar." A familiar meow was close to her.

She looked forward to see the past Driftclan leader, Shellstar. "Shellstar..." She meowed quietly.

He gave a smile that soon faded. "You are losing a life."

"Is that why I'm here?"

Shellstar nodded.

"Do I still have time to save Morningpaw?" she questioned.

"I do not know."

Featherstar soon saw a faint look of a cat that looked like her stand next to Shellstar. *Is that me?* Featherstar thought. "That's a lost life. Every time you lose a life you will come here and see the life that you have lost," Shellstar meowed.

"I see..." the Driftclan leader replied.

Shellstar slowly faded away. "Do your best to save Morningpaw, Featherstar. I believe in you."

"I will."

Featherstar's vision then went black as she woke up.

*

Featherstar opened her eyes. There was snow on top of her. She slowly got up, her legs feeling like they had almost gotten frozen.

The Driftclan leader shook the snow off of her fur. *Morningpaw!* She thought as she turned her head around to see if her apprentice was okay.

No...

"No!" she thought out loud as she ran over to Morningpaw's snow covered body.

She moved the snow off the grey-furred apprentice's body with her paws. "Speak to me..." She meowed. Featherstar saw dried blood around Morningpaw's neck and on the snow near her maw. "Morningpaw, please!" She placed her muzzle against her neck. Tears fell down from Featherstar's light-green eyes as she picked up the motionless Morningpaw by the scruff. As the snow fell, Featherstar trudged back to Driftclan camp.

*

A few heartbeats later, Featherstar entered the camp and set Morningpaw down. Tears still fell down her face. Soon, a warrior padded over to her.

It was Fang.

"What happened to my daughter?" Fang's mew shook.

"S-Shredflash killed her..." Featherstar replied.

"N-No... No, no..." Fang repeated as she leaned down towards her daughter and placed her muzzled against her neck. "This can't be..."

Soon, Driftclan gathered around the three she-cats. There were gasps and whispers as a crowd of cats formed. A tom then stepped forward. His orange-red eyes widened as he yelled. "Morningpaw!"

Featherstar looked up to see Mistfall pressing himself against his daughter, tears falling onto the snow. *I'm sorry, Mistfall...* Featherstar thought.

It wasn't too long before Shadowpaw padded out of the Apprentices' den and over to the crowd. He pushed his way through until he saw

his mother and father lying with Morningpaw. The black-furred tom's eyes widened as he padded over, not knowing how to feel. "Who did it?" He asked Featherstar.

"Shredflash... You do not know of him, do you?" the leader replied.

"No."

Fang looked at Shadowpaw. "Shredflash is... My father."

Shadowpaw's eyes widened. "What?"

"I thought I killed him moons ago... How is he still alive?" Mistfall whispered.

"I do not know, Mistfall." Featherstar replied.

Shadowpaw felt his anger rise. He unsheathed his claws. "You failed to protect my sister!" he shouted at Featherstar.

There were gasps from the crowd.

"S-Shadowpaw! Calm down!" Eagleswoop then padded next to him.

"I told her to run back here. She didn't. The last thing I saw before I lost a life was Morningpaw run back and attack Shredflash." Featherstar meowed.

Shadowpaw sheathed his claws as his eyes seemed to darken. "You fish-brain..." he slowly padded over to his sister, tears now slowly falling from his eyes. He pressed his head against hers. "Why would you fight alone...?" his mew shook as he cried.

Featherstar stood, tears still falling. "Cats of Driftclan." She called to her clan.

Every cat looked and stared at their leader. Featherstar nearly winced as she saw Frogpaw's head down. "Morningpaw has proven herself to be worthy of a warrior name by defending her clan." she meowed.

"I ask my warrior ancestors to look down on my apprentice. She has

learned the warrior code and given up her life in service of Driftclan. Let Starclan receive them as a warrior. She will be known as Morningwaters." Featherstar meowed.

"Morningwaters, Morningwaters, Morningwaters!" Driftclan cheered for their fallen warrior.

*

Shadowpaw sat between Mistfall and Fang as they sat a vigil for Morningwaters by the Ocean Side. Featherstar and Frogpaw were with them. The black-furred tom could only think about wanting Shredflash gone. *He must've killed Eclipse as well...* He thought. Something then echoed in his mind.

"*The morning's shadow will stop the shred...*"

Shadowpaw's eyes widened as he remembered it.

He and his sister were part of the prophecy, and so was Shredflash.

It's up to me to stop this Shredflash.

I'm the only one who can do it.

Chapter 29

"Nice one, Sunpaw." Lionstrike meowed as blood dripped from the side of his muzzle.

"Did you see that, Shred?! I got him!" she meowed excitedly.

"I did! Excellent work!" Shred replied, smiling.

She's doing better than the first time we started for sure. Lionstrike thought. Then he readied himself to fight his apprentice again. "Again, Sunpaw."

"Okay!" she replied with a smirk. Then she unsheathed her claws.

Lionstrike unsheathed his claws and circled Sunpaw. The tom watched as his apprentice slowly followed him in the circle while looking at him. Sunpaw has gone from a scared little kit to a soon-to-be ferocious warrior. He thought as he lunged at his apprentice with a growl. Sunpaw moved back and then hopped forwards to scratch at Lionstrike's legs. Lionstrike smirked as he rammed himself into Sunpaw, causing her to stumble back for a few heartbeats before she ran over to her mentor and ran past him. Lionstrike slowly turned, but Sunpaw had suddenly launched herself onto Lionstrike's haunches. Pushing her claws in, causing her mentor to yowl in pain. Lionstrike then fell over onto his side. Sunpaw's back now hitting the ground, causing her to gasp for air as she let go of her mentor. Lionstrike got up and stood over Sunpaw. "You'll be an excellent warrior."

The apprentice panted, but smiled as she got up. "I know!"

"It's not too far before you become a warrior, Sunpaw! Your sisters will never underestimate you again!" Shred meowed.

"Yeah! And I'll stop them if they try to get in my way again!" she meowed and smirked.

"Enough talk, let's go again." Lionstrike meowed, then unsheathed his claws once more.

"Yeah, yeah!" Sunpaw unsheathed her claws and bared her teeth at her mentor as they charged towards each other.

*

"Shredflash!" Shred mewed right in his ear.

"What...?" He groggily replied and yawned. The tom had slept next to Aurora.

"I have something important to tell you!" Shred hopped around him.

"Well, just tell me already," Shredflash grunted.

"You're having another litter!"

"I'm what?!" He then hopped up onto his paws. He looked at Aurora. She was still peacefully sleeping. Shredflash allowed her to sleep, because he didn't want her to stay up for too long.

"Yep!" Shred's tail swayed.

"With-"

The eyeless cat cut him off. "Aurora!"

Shredflash was speechless as he looked at the silver-furred she-cat. "This can't be a good thing.."

"It's not good. It's amazing!" Shred mewed happily.

"How?"

"Think about it. If you somehow die, then your kin could continue your destiny to end Driftclan and Vertexclan!" Shred said.

"That..." Shredflash's voice trailed off as he thought for a few heartbeats.

"I could train the litter to be just like me."

"Yes! Yes! Now you're getting it!" Shred purred.

Shredflash lied down with Aurora once more. It surprised him that Aurora had his litter in her belly, but it turned out to be a wonderful surprise. There was one thing that Shredflash feared. He himself knows he won't be able to avoid it.

Shredflash feared the way he would have to train the litter.

Chapter 30

"Shadowpaw, are you sure you want to do your warrior assessment with the other apprentices? We can wait a little while, I don't mind!" Eagleswoop meowed to his apprentice.

Shadowpaw nodded. "I'm doing this for Morningwaters."

"Let's start with hunting then, shall we?" Eagleswoop meowed.

Shadowpaw nodded once more. Then Eagleswoop padded out of Driftclan camp, Shadowpaw right behind him.

*

"This will not end well for me..." Adderpaw sighed.

"Don't be so hard on yourself, Adderpaw!" Sandcoat started. "You'll do just fine. Just remember what you learned, and everything will be as smooth as ice!" he meowed.

Adderpaw smiled and looked towards her mentor. "You're right, Sandcoat. I shouldn't be so hard on myself... I've done just as much as the other apprentices. Maybe even more! Being blind is fine, because you have shown me that there are ways to overcome it! I'm going to be a warrior soon. And I'll be the first blind warrior of Driftclan! I'll show every cat you don't need sight to be an excellent warrior!" Adderpaw puffed her chest out.

Sandcoat purred. "There we go! You'll be the greatest warrior ever!"

"Yeah!" Her tail swayed.

"Ready to start?" Sandcoat asked.

Adderpaw nodded.

"Find me!" Adderpaw's mentor ran off somewhere.

The brown and yellow-furred she-cat smirked as she sniffed the air. You're already making it way too easy, Sandcoat! She thought, then began tracking his scent.

*

"I hope you're ready, Wavepaw! Your assessment will start soon. We're going hunting with Kingletpaw and Gullstalk as a start!" Sagethorn mewed to her apprentice.

"I was born ready!" Wavepaw meowed.

"Then let's get it going!" Sagethorn and Wavepaw turned around to see Gullstalk and Kingletpaw.

Sagethorn nodded in response as she padded towards the entrance of the camp. Wavepaw, Kingletpaw, and Gullstalk followed her over and out of the camp.

*

Frogpaw gulped as she stared into the water that was before her. Mistfall padded up next to her and lied his tail on her back. "Don't worry, Frogpaw. You've got this!" he meowed.

Frogpaw took a deep breath in and then out as she placed her front paws into the chilly water. "I won't let you down, Mistfall." She meowed and continued padding into the water.

*

Shadowpaw waited for a while, staring at his prey as it slowly moved past his eyes. He then unsheathed his claws and scratched it with his paw. It surprised Shadowpaw that there was even prey out here with it being leaf-bare and all. Shadowpaw watched as the prey fell limp. *Guess they just want to die at my paws, like Shredflash.* He thought, then picked it up with his maw. It was a thrush. "Wonderful job, Shadowpaw!" Eagleswoop praised his apprentice.

"Thanks." He meowed through the thrush.

"Set it down, because we're going swimming!" Eagleswoop meowed.

"We'll come back for it later!"

Shadowpaw nodded and set his catch down. His mentor then padded towards the Ocean Side, with him following behind.

*

After Adderpaw had found Sandcoat, the two cats had gone swimming with Shadowpaw and Eagleswoop. "That was fun, don't you think, Shadowpaw?" Adderpaw meowed to the black-furred apprentice as they padded back to camp. Adderpaw sniffed the air. Sandcoat and Eagleswoop's scents were behind them.

"Yeah, especially since you were with me." he mewed back.

Adderpaw blushed as she padded close to Shadowpaw. "Really?"

"Yep." Shadowpaw continued his way back to Driftclan camp.

Adderpaw sniffed the air once more. Sandcoat was right next to her. "Hey, Sandcoat?"

"Yeah, Adderpaw?" he replied.

"Thanks for being my mentor!" She meowed happily.

Sandcoat purred and smiled. "You're very welcome! I'm happy that I trained you as my apprentice!"

The four cats padded back into Driftclan camp.

*

A while later, every cat gathered at the frozen Tide Pool.

Soon Featherstar padded over to face her clan. "Cats of Driftclan," she started. "Every apprentice has done excellent in their training according to their mentors." Her gaze traveled from apprentice to apprentice.

There was silence for a few heartbeats.

"The apprentices will be warriors next sunhigh!" Featherstar

meowed to her clan.

The crowd of Driftclan cats cheered and rejoiced in happiness.

"I am proud of all of you. It's been a long sunrise. Get some rest, my fellow clanmates. You all deserve it!" Featherstar smiled, while she watched her clan disperse from the crowd they were in.

Chapter 31

Today is the day!

Today is the day that I, Sunpaw, become the greatest warrior in Vertexclan!

I hopped up onto my paws. I was in the Apprentices' den with my sisters. I looked to my left as they usually sleep away from me now, because they are afraid of me!

Serves them right for telling me I couldn't be the greatest warrior! I'll shed any cat's blood that tries to get in my way from being the greatest of all time! I smirked at my thought as I stretched into my nest. I quickly padded out of the den, because I just couldn't wait to get my warrior name! I looked around the camp. Some of my clanmates were roaming around the snow.

It doesn't feel cold at all!

I continued looking around for my mentor. I couldn't find him.

Maybe he's still with Shred! I thought, then strolled around the camp with my head held high.

I'm going to be a warrior!

"Cats of Vertexclan!" I turned my head to see Skystar next to the Sharp Stone.

"Please gather around the Sharp Stone for a clan meeting!" he yelled.

It's finally time!! I thought excitedly and ran over to the Sharp Stone as quick as I could. I then sat down in front of the Sharp Stone as I watched my clanmates gather around the frozen stone.

"I shall appoint three new warriors!" He meowed. "Jumppaw, Breezepaw, and Sunpaw. Please step forward."

Yes! I stepped towards the Sharp Stone with my sisters on the left side of me.

"Jumppaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even at the cost of your life?" Skystar asked.

"I do." Jumppaw meowed.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Jumppaw, from this moment you will be known as Jumpleg. Starclan honors your courage, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Vertexclan!"

Jumpleg smiled.

"Breezepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even at the cost of your life?" Skystar asked.

"I do." Breezepaw replied.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Breezepaw, from this moment you will be known as Breezebird. Starclan honors your bravery, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Vertexclan!" He meowed happily.

"Thank you, Skystar!" she mewed back.

Skystar's gaze landed on me. I gave a wide smile.

"Sunpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even at the cost of your life?" He asked me.

"I do! I do!" I mewed.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Sunpaw, from this moment you will be known as Sunsting. Starclan honors your skill, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Vertexclan!" He mewed to me.

"Thank you so much, Skystar!" I said, nearly hopping up and down

like a kit.

"Jumpleg, Breezebird, Sunsting!" Vertexclan cheered for us.

"The clan meeting is now over." Skystar meowed and padded back to his den.

The surrounding crowd dispersed. As they did, I padded over to Lionstrike. "I'm a warrior now, Lionstrike!" I meowed.

"I know." he meowed back.

"Are you proud of me?" I asked.

"Very."

I smiled at Lionstrike.

I'm finally a warrior! And the greatest one to exist!

*

Marigoldfur padded into Skystar's den.

Skystar looked up at the medicine cat. "Yes?"

"Skystar... Believe Nova and I! Shredflash is alive and we need to be careful!" she meowed.

Skystar sighed. "Marigoldfur..."

"Please, Skystar!" Marigoldfur pleaded.

Skystar sighed once more. He didn't want to believe it, but if Marigoldfur continued on about it, then something must be wrong. "I'll believe you two." He said.

Marigoldfur smiled. "Wonderful! We'll be on the lookout when we go to the Ocean Side!" she meowed.

"Okay. I'll gather a patrol so we can check the territory and borders to see if he's been around there." He meowed.

Marigoldfur nodded and padded out of the den.

Skystar sighed.

I'll make sure he's dead.

Chapter 32

Shadowpaw tossed and turned in his nest. He was sweating as he groaned, then his fur felt hot. He was having a nightmare. "Morningwaters... I'm sorry... Please forgive me..." He whispered. Adderpaw's ear flickered as she heard Shadowpaw whisper next to him. *He's having another nightmare...* She thought as she turned to him and licked his cheek. "Please wake up..." she mewed to him.

Soon Shadowpaw's eyes shot open. He lifted his head and looked around until he looked at Adderpaw. "Hey, Adderpaw." He meowed.

"Are you okay?" She asked him.

"Yeah, I'm fine." he meowed back and gave a small.

"You can tell me anything, Shadowpaw." Adderpaw nuzzled the black-furred tom.

"Don't worry about it, Adderpaw. If there's anything wrong, I'll speak to you about it later, okay?" He reassured her.

"Okay, I guess, but I have my eyes on you!" She mewed.

Shadowpaw licked her cheek. "You're silly."

Adderpaw blushed and giggled.

"Cats of Driftclan, please gather around the Tide Pool for a clan meeting!" A voice yelled from outside of the Apprentices' den.

Shadowpaw watched as the other apprentices in the den padded out and over to the Tide Pool. "Come on, Adderpaw." he mewed to her. "It's time."

"Yeah!" She got up.

Shadowpaw got up onto his paws and stretched. Then padded out of the den, with Adderpaw close behind him. A few heartbeats

later, Driftclan had gathered around the frozen Tide Pool as they looked at their leader. "I have gathered you all here today because there will be five new warriors." Featherstar meowed.

"Kingletpaw, please step forward."

The light brown-furred tom did as he was told.

"Kingletpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?" the leader meowed.

"I do." Kingletpaw meowed back.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Kingletpaw, from this moment you will be known as Kingletsong. Starclan honors your strength, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan," Featherstar said.

Kingletsong padded back.

"Wavepaw, please step forward."

Wavepaw padded up to the Tide Pool.

"Wavepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?" She asked.

"I do," Wavepaw replied.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Wavepaw, from this moment you will be known as Wavestorm. Starclan honors your loyalty, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan." the leader meowed.

Wavestorm smiled and padded back.

"Avalanchepaw, please step forward."

The brown-furred tom stepped towards the Tide Pool.

"Avalanchepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?"

"I do."

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Avalanchepaw, from this moment you will be known as Avalancheflight. Starclan honors your skill, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan."

"Thank you, Featherstar." he replied, then padded back.

"Frogpaw, please step forward." Featherstar mewed.

She did so.

"Frogpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?"

"I-I do!" Frogpaw replied, then puffed her chest out.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Frogpaw, from this moment you will be known as Frogmoon. Starclan honors your courage, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan," Featherstar said.

"Thank you so much, Featherstar! I won't let you down!" Frogmoon mewed back and padded into the crowd.

Featherstar smiled. "Adderpaw, please step forward."

Adderpaw padded towards the Tide Pool, but not too close to it, not wanting to fall in.

"Adderpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?"

"I do, Featherstar!"

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Adderpaw, from this moment you will be known as Addersky. Starclan honors your spirit, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan." Featherstar meowed.

Addersky gave a wide smile as she slowly turned and padded back

towards Shadowpaw.

"And Shadowpaw, please step forward."

Shadowpaw padded up to the Tide Pool.

"Shadowpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect Driftclan, even if it means your life?" Featherstar meowed.

"I do," Shadowpaw replied.

"Then, by the powers of Starclan, I give you your warrior name. Shadowpaw, from this moment you will be known as Shadowblossom. Starclan honors your skill, and we welcome you as a full warrior of Driftclan!" The Driftclan leader meowed.

"Kingletsong! Wavestorm! Avalancheflight! Frogmoon! Addersky! Shadowblossom!" Driftclan cheered for their new warriors.

"This clan meeting is now over!" Featherstar meowed.

Addersky nuzzled Shadowblossom. "I'm so happy, Shadowblossom! We're warriors now!"

"That's good," He meowed back as he saw Mistfall, Fang, and Ripplewave pad over to them.

Shadowblossom looked at his parents. Mistfall's smile was wider than Fang's. "We're so proud of you, Shadowblossom! You'll do wonderfully as a warrior!" Mistfall purred.

"We're very proud of you, Shadowblossom!" Fang added on.

Shadowblossom gave a small smile.

"I'm proud of both of you. Especially you, Addersky!" Ripplewave mewed to her daughter.

Addersky blushed and purred.

Shadowblossom looked around before looking at the Warriors' den.

"I'm tired." He meowed.

*

"Hey, Shadowblossom!" a voice whispered in his ear.

Shadowblossom jolted awake, shooting up into his paws.

"Morningwaters..." He meowed as he looked at his sister.

Both he and Morningwaters were standing on water surrounded by the stars in the air. "Yep!" She gave a wide smile.

"I'm sorry that I wasn't there for you... I would've ended that foolish Shredflash..." Shadowblossom meowed, looking down.

"Don't worry, Shadowblossom! Lift your head for me, please!" Morningwaters said.

The black-furred tom did so.

"You are the morning's shadow that will stop the shred, Shadowblossom. I believe you can stop Shredflash from harming cats once and for all!" Morningwaters said and smiled.

Shadowblossom had tears falling from his eyes. "I will end him, Morningwaters."

She padded over to him and licked his cheek. "I know you will! Stay strong for me, okay?"

Shadowblossom nodded in response.

"I'll be watching over you!" Morningwaters meowed.

Everything around Shadowblossom then went black as his sister faded away.

Chapter 33

"I'm ready to kill Buzzardgaze!" Sunsting meowed and bared her teeth with a smirk. Her claws unsheathed.

"Calm down, Sunsting," Lionstrike started. "I know it's exciting for you, but we still have to be careful about this."

"Lionstrike is right! One wrong move and you'll both get exiled!" Shred padded out of the shadows near a small cave that had few stars in it.

"What's the plan again...?" Sunsting tilted her head to the side.

Lionstrike let out a loud sigh.

Shred giggled. "You and Lionstrike go to Buzzardgaze and say you both want to go on a patrol, then soon, you both strike and kill him once you're far enough from Vertexclan camp!" he meowed.

Sunsting smirked once more, loving the idea of killing another cat. "Will this show how excellent I am, Shred?" she asked.

The eyeless tom nodded. "It will!"

Sunsting smiled. "Yes! The greatest warrior of Vertexclan will be even greater!" she meowed.

Shred chuckled. Lionstrike sighed once more.

"When are we doing this?" Lionstrike asked.

"Once you two wake up!" Shred replied.

"Are you ready to shed blood, Lionstrike?" Sunsting asked her former mentor.

Lionstrike nodded. "I'm always ready."

*

Sunsting woke up in her nest in the Vertexclan warriors' den. She yawned and then stretched as she looked over at Lionstrike, who was stirring up. The ginger-furred she-cat got up and padded over to the tom. She whispered in his ear. "Come on, Lionstrike!"

Lionstrike looked at Sunsting, nearly muzzle to muzzle with her. "Okay, but can you step back a bit?"

"O-Oh, sorry!" Sunsting blushed and stepped back.

Lionstrike stretched his body out before getting up. He looked around the den. Buzzardgaze wasn't in there with them.

"Buzzardgaze should be around camp somewhere." the cream-furred tom mewed.

"Are you looking for Buzzardgaze?" Sunsting and Lionstrike turned their heads to see Smokedream, Buzzardgaze's mate, get up and yawn.

"Yeah, we are! Where is he?" Sunsting asked.

"He goes to the fresh-kill pile every time he wakes up. So he should be there right now." she meowed to her clanmates.

"Great! Come on, Lionstrike!" Sunsting padded out of the den, and Lionstrike soon followed her.

A few heartbeats later, the two cats padded over to Buzzardgaze. The deputy was happily eating a gull. He soon looked up at the two. "Hi!" He meowed and smiled.

"Hey."

"Hi!"

"Need something?" Buzzardgaze asked.

"We want to go on a patrol with you, is that okay?" Lionstrike meowed.

Buzzardgaze swallowed the rest of his prey and stood up. "Sure!"

"Well, that was easy..." Lionstrike mumbled.

"Let's go, you two!" The Vertexclan deputy smiled and padded to the entrance of camp, Lionstrike and Sunsting following behind.

The three cats soon left the camp.

*

It was silent as the three Vertexclan cats padded away from the camp. They were pretty far now.

Sunsting was ready to strike at any moment.

"So, how's being a warrior so far, Sunsting?" Buzzardgaze asked the ginger-furred she-cat.

"It's amazing!" She replied and smiled.

"That's great!" The deputy meowed.

"How's being a deputy, Buzzardgaze?" Lionstrike asked.

"Wonderful!"

Lionstrike halted and unsheathed his claws. "That's nice."

"Is something wrong?" Buzzardgaze stopped padding, along with Sunsting. "Why did you stop?"

With no hesitation, Lionstrike slashed his right paw at Buzzardgaze. Digging his claws into the deputy's neck. The deputy was speechless as blood dripped from the side. Sunsting unsheathed her claws and lifted her paws. She soon dug them into Buzzardgaze's back. "Bleed, Buzzardgaze, bleed!" she meowed.

Lionstrike rammed himself into the deputy, causing him to stumble back. Sunsting forced the tom's body on its side with her paws as she took her claws out of him. "Have at him, Sunsting." Lionstrike meowed.

"Yes, yes!" She meowed as she started clawing into Buzzardgaze's side, causing him to shriek in pain as blood stained the snow below their paws. "I'm the greatest warrior ever!" Sunsting meowed in triumph as she shed blood from her now dying clanmate.

Buzzardgaze coughed up blood as he looked at Lionstrike. "W-Why did you two do this...?" his mew was rasp.

Lionstrike didn't answer. He then padded away from Buzzardgaze. "Let's go tell the clan what truly happened, Sunsting." he meowed.

Sunsting took her claws out of the Vertexclan deputy and padded after Lionstrike.

They left Buzzardgaze there in the freezing and blood stained snow as he soon stopped breathing.

*

"Something feels off..." Nova meowed to Marigoldfur.

"Huh?" Marigoldfur seemed confused.

"I can't explain it, but something just... Isn't right." she meowed, padding out of the Medicine Den.

The golden-furred she-cat followed Nova worriedly.

"I guess it's just me then-"

Nova was then cut off by seeing Lionstrike and Sunsting run into camp.

"Shredflash attacked us and killed Buzzardgaze!" Sunsting meowed.

Chapter 34

Addersky sniffed the chilly air as she padded around Driftclan camp. She wanted to make sure she knew her way around so she wouldn't bump into anything. Unfortunately, she's bumped into other warriors. *Well, one day I won't bump into any cat!* She thought as she sniffed the ground and continued padding around the camp. A few heartbeats later, she bumped into another clanmate again. "O-Oops! I'm sorry!" she meowed.

"It's fine, I'm not bothered by it." Addersky recognized the meow of Shadowblossom.

Her fur suddenly felt hot. "Shadowblossom!" she meowed.

"Yep, it's me. Are you searching for something?" He asked.

Addersky shook her head. "Nope! Just trying to get around the camp better!" She replied, her heart beating faster from just hearing Shadowblossom's meow.

"No wonder why you were bumping into every other cat around the camp."

Addersky gave a nervous chuckle. "I-I guess I'll continue on then!" Addersky said.

"Hold on." Shadowblossom mewed.

"H-Huh?"

"I need to tell you something, Addersky." the black-furred tom meowed to her.

"Yes, Shadowblossom?" Addersky's fur felt hotter now.

"I've been in love with you since we were kits. And I want to be mates with you, Addersky. You make me a happy tom. Every time that I am around you, I just want to smile and stay next to you,"

Shadowblossom meowed, closer to her now.

Addersky blushed heavily, not knowing how to respond.

"Will you be mates with me, Addersky?" Shadowblossom asked the brown and yellow-furred she-cat.

Addersky teared up and touched muzzles with Shadowblossom. "Yes, Shadowblossom! I will be mates with you!" she replied.

Shadowblossom smiled as he touched muzzles with his mate.

*

"Now, Drizzlepaw. What is this herb?" Thistlewhisper meowed to her apprentice.

"Um..." Drizzlepaw observed the herb for a few heartbeats and sniffed it. "This is the dock, right?" she meowed.

Thistlewhisper nodded and smiled. "Yep! Now what's this herb and what is it used for?" She pointed at tiny brown branches that had gotten withered from the cold.

"Didn't you tell me that these were Goatweed and that a cat shouldn't take a ton all at once?" Drizzlepaw meowed.

Thistlewhisper nodded. "Yeah, wonderful job!" as she praised her apprentice.

Drizzlepaw purred and smiled. She then had a curious look on her face. "You never told me why a cat shouldn't, though." She meowed.

Thistlewhisper's smile turned into a frown.

"O-Oh.." the apprentice looked down. "You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to..." she meowed.

"No, it's fine," Thistlewhisper replied.

Drizzlepaw lifted her head and looked at her mentor.

"My brother, Dampbreeze, got killed by this herb moons ago. He

lost his mate, Blizzardfluff, and he wanted to ease his grief. So he came to me and I gave him Goatweed. After a few moons of using it, he wanted more of it. Dampbreeze then ate a ton. He soon..." Thistlewhisper took a deep breath in and then out. "He soon died afterwards."

Drizzlepaw pressed herself against her mentor. "I'm sorry that this happened, Thistlewhisper... He's watching over us now from Starclan, I'm sure of it!" she mewed.

"I'm sure of it as well, Drizzlepaw." the medicine cat replied.

I hope you're doing well in Starclan, Dampbreeze.

Chapter 35

Shredflash padded past the trees as he was searching for prey to give to Aurora. *She hasn't eaten in a while... She needs to keep her strength up so the litter will be healthy.* He thought as he sniffed the air, but only felt the chilly air go into his nose. "Shredflash!" Shred mewed from behind him.

The grey-furred tom didn't turn. "What?"

"Aurora ate not too long ago! What are you doing hunting for now?" he asked.

"I'm just making sure she's fine for when she has the litter, Shred. We don't have a medicine cat, and both of us don't know any medicine cat skills. You saw how my father trained me." Shredflash meowed to the eyeless tom.

"Shredflash... Don't worry! Aurora is fine, the litter will be fine. And we'll be fine too!" Shred replied, then smiled up at Shredflash.

Shredflash sighed and padded back to the old camp. "Fine, I won't hunt. I'll just stay by her to keep her warm, or until there is another cat for us to rid of." he said.

Shred padded next to Shredflash. "Lionstrike and Sunsting killed Buzzardgaze!"

"That's good. Buzzardgaze as a leader doesn't sound right to me." Shredflash meowed.

"You know what sounds right, Shredflash?"

"What?"

"You as a leader!" Shred said.

"Hm... I don't want to lead a clan. I want to do my thing and not have to follow Starclan. Starclan watched as I got tortured and

abused by my father, Blacksting, as an apprentice. Where were they when that was happening to me?" Shredflash felt anger rise in him.

"Who knows?" Shred replied. "You may not lead a clan, but you lead Aurora, Sunsting and Lionstrike, don't you?"

"That's all you, Shred. You're more of a leader than I am." Shredflash meowed, as he was now close to Aurora's den.

"I just help you out, you're the true leader here! And you'll be the one to end the clans!" Shred mewed.

"Right." Shredflash padded into the den and over to Aurora. She was sleeping peacefully.

The grey-tom lied next to her and pressed himself against her. He whispered in her ear. "I love you, Aurora," as he lied his head onto his paws.

*

Rainpad padded out of the Warriors' den and looked over at the Medicine den. *I know she still loves me, as I love her.* He thought. Rainpad wanted nothing more than to be with Marigoldfur. Rainpad still had hoped that Marigoldfur would be mates with him. He knew they forbid it, but he didn't care. Rainpad would make sure that him being mates with Marigoldfur would get held from the clan for as long as he has to hold it for. Rainpad then padded towards the medicine den and soon stopped once he saw Lionstrike and Sunsting run into camp.

"Shredflash attacked us and killed Buzzardgaze!" Sunsting meowed.

Rainpad's eyes widened. He couldn't believe what he was hearing.

Chapter 36

Shadowblossom...

Shadowblossom, you must wake up!

Shadowblossom jolted awake. The tom was lying next to his mate, Addersky. *Who was talking to me?* He thought, then looked around. Some Driftclan warriors were sleeping in their nests. Other nests were empty because of the rest of the warriors being outside of the Warriors' den. Shadowblossom was going to drift back off into sleep until a starry-furred cat appeared in front of him.

The black-furred tom's periwinkle eyes widened as he mewed. "Morningwaters..."

"Hi, Shadowblossom!" she meowed.

"W-What are you here for?" He whispered so he wouldn't wake up Addersky.

"You must head to the Ocean Side and wait for Shredflash. He'll be going there... And that will be your chance to stop him once and for all!" She meowed.

Shadowblossom slowly got up onto his paws, now having a serious look on his face. Morningwaters smiled as she soon faded away in front of her brother's eyes. Shadowblossom then padded out of the den and out into the cold. The black-furred tom padded over to the entrance of Driftclan camp. "I am the morning's shadow that will defeat the shred once and for all..." Shadowblossom whispered to himself.

He then padded out of the camp and down to the Ocean Side.

He was prepared to spill Shredflash's blood and end him.

Chapter 37

"When we get back into the camp, you need to yell that Shredflash attacked us and killed Buzzardgaze." Lionstrike meowed to the ginger-furred she-cat.

"Got it!" She replied, lashing her tail.

The two Vertexclan warriors padded back to the camp. Soon, both of them ran in. "Shredflash attacked us and killed Buzzardgaze!" Sunsting meowed.

Skystar was the first one to run over to them. "What?!"

"Come with us, please!" Sunsting ran out of the camp, Lionstrike following.

Skystar looked over at the medicine den. "Nova, come with us, now!" the Vertexclan leader ordered.

Nova nodded and ran out of the camp with Skystar.

A few heartbeats later, the four Vertexclan cats ran up to Buzzardgaze's snow covered body. Skystar's eyes widened as he slowly padded closer to the deputy, tears falling down from his eyes and onto the snow. "No..." Skystar slowly pushed the snow off of the grey and tawny-furred tom's body, now seeing the claw marks from what he could assume to be from Shredflash.

"No!" the leader shouted, then put his muzzle onto Buzzardgaze's shoulder. He looked over at Nova with more tears falling from his eyes.

Nova padded over to them and checked the tom's body. "Shredflash must've ended it quickly with Buzzardgaze..." She meowed.

Skystar put his head down and continued to cry for his fallen deputy.

"I chased after Shredflash, but he got away... If I was only faster, I would've torn him to shreds.." Lionstrike meowed, letting out a growl.

"I scratched him on the side before he ran!" Sunsting added on.

"Let's head back to the camp..." Skystar meowed. "We'll set a vigil for him after I gather the clan and tell them the news.." He said.

The three cats nodded.

Skystar then turned himself and padded back to Vertexclan camp, his clanmates behind him.

*

Once they had returned to camp, Skystar called for a clan meeting. "Our former clanmate, Shredflash, killed Buzzardgaze." He meowed, holding back his tears.

There were gasps, but the rest of the clan was silent.

"He was an amazing warrior, a wonderful friend, and would've been an outstanding leader..." Skystar said.

"Buzzardgaze! Buzzardgaze! Buzzardgaze!" The clan cheered for their fallen clanmate.

"Th-The clan meeting is now over!" Skystar meowed and padded back into his den.

Lionstrike soon followed Skystar into his den. Once he padded in, he saw the Vertexclan leader with his head on his paws. "Skystar?"

Skystar looked up at Lionstrike with tears falling down the sides of his face.

"Would Buzzardgaze want you to be like this? Would he want you to cry over him? No. He would want you to be strong and push through it. He would want you to lead the clan as the strong and excellent leader you are, Skystar." Lionstrike said.

Skystar stared at Lionstrike.

"I can help you, Skystar. I trained Sunsting well and I... No... *We* can lead Vertexclan together and become greater. We can overcome Shredflash!" Lionstrike meowed.

Skystar wiped his tears away with his paws and then stood up. "Come with me." he meowed and padded out of the den.

Lionstrike nodded and followed his leader. He then halted next to the tom.

"Cats of Vertexclan!" He called.

Every cat stopped what they were doing and looked at Skystar.

"Our fellow clanmate Lionstrike is the new deputy of Vertexclan!" Skystar meowed.

*

Shredflash was curled up next to Aurora, sleeping. Shred nudged the sleeping Shredflash, "Shredflash, wake up!" he mewed.

"What do you want...?" Shredflash yawned as he opened his eyes.

"A cat is trying to harm Aurora!"

Shredflash instantly got up into his paws. "Where are they?" he meowed.

"They are at the Ocean Side. They're from Driftclan." Shred replied.

Shredflash said nothing more and padded out of the den.

He'd make sure Aurora and their litter would be safe.

Chapter 38

Addersky was now stirring up in her nest. It had been a long moon for her, because she just became a warrior, but it had lifted her troubles once she became mates with Shadowblossom. "Shadowblossom...?" she meowed, as she couldn't feel the warmth of her mate next to her. She sniffed the air. His scent was faint. *Where is he?* She meowed and got up, stretching in her nest. She then sniffed the air for other scents in the Warriors' den. Soon the scent of Mistfall was heavy in her nose. "Hey, Mistfall!" she meowed.

"Hi, Addersky! Are you looking for Shadowblossom?" he asked, lashing his tail.

"Yeah! Do you know where he is?" She replied.

"I remember seeing him leave the den. He was mumbling to himself, I wonder why?" Mistfall mewed.

"Oh, dear..." Addersky meowed back. "Well, thanks! I'll be looking for him now."

"Anytime, Addersky!" Mistfall meowed.

Addersky sniffed at the cold ground and followed her mate's scent as she padded out of the den. She felt the chilly snow on her paws as she continued sniffing. Addersky then bumped into another cat. *Not again...* She meowed as she sniffed out the scent for who it was. Addersky gave a smile once she recognized the scent. "Ripplewave!" she meowed.

"Hi, Addersky." her mother replied.

"Have you seen Shadowblossom?" she meowed.

She shook her head. "Nope. Sorry."

Addersky sighed.

I hope he's okay...

*

Mistfall sat by the fresh-kill pile, staring at a partially eaten fish. There was one thing on his mind, and that one thing was the reason his daughter was dead. *I killed Shredflash so long ago... How is he alive...?* He thought, tears welling up in his orange-red eyes now. *I should've looked for him when I saw him... Why did I have to think it was just me seeing things?* Mistfall's tears fell into the snow. A few heartbeats later, another cat padded over to Mistfall. "Hey, Mistfall!" they meowed.

Mistfall looked up to see his mate, Fang.

The black-furred she-cat then frowned, "Oh, Mistfall... What's wrong?" she nuzzled her mate and touched muzzles with him.

"I miss her, Fang. If only I were there... I could've stopped Shredflash... I-I..."

"Calm down, Mistfall... I know, I miss her too, but we have to stay strong for her and for our clan too. Shredflash will get stopped and will not harm anymore cats. I'm sure of it," Fang mewed and licked his cheek.

"Are you sure, Fang?" Mistfall asked, staring into her eyes.

Fang stared back, "I'm sure, Mistfall."

Mistfall smiled at his mate. "I love you!"

Fang smiled back and touched muzzles with him once more. "I love you too!"

"Want to share this fish with me?" The tom asked.

"Sure!" Fang then lied down with Mistfall, then enjoyed the juicy fish with him.

It'll all get better. Mistfall thought.

Chapter 39

I've done it.

I've become the deputy of Vertexclan.

This is a wonderful feeling. I can order other cats around and I can tell them what to do! Well, mostly.

If I want full control, I must become the leader of Vertexclan. And to do that...

Sunsting and I will have to rid of Skystar. Though, that is all up to Shred and what he has planned next. I padded out of the Warriors' den and looked around. The camp was quiet today. And that is fine. I wonder who I should send on a patrol first or even send out of the camp to hunt?

No matter.

One day, I will be the next leader of Vertexclan.

And I'll get you back, Ripplewave... Whatever my next task may be, I will get you back, and you will be my mate once more!

I sighed. Those moons ago, when we met up in that spot. She could've come to Vertexclan with me and had our litter... But she decided otherwise and went back to her clan. The thought of it still messes with my head sometimes. I don't get to see my kits grow and become the powerful warriors they could be now!

I hold back my anger often.

Maybe I can take that anger out on my clanmates.

Killing Buzzardgaze felt good, after all.

*

I did it!

We did it!

Lionstrike and I killed Buzzardgaze, and Lionstrike became the deputy of Vertexclan!

I truly am one of the greatest warriors to exist! Not just in my clan, but in both clans! I'm the most powerful warrior and nothing can stop me! No cat will stand in my way, and if they do, they'll feel my wrath and blood will get shed by me! I looked around and saw my sister, Breezebird, padding around the camp. I smirked as I padded over to her. She looked at me and nearly ran away at the sight of someone as great as me! "Hi!" I meowed to her.

"H-Hey, Sunsting..." She meowed back.

"You remember as kits when you said I wouldn't be the best?" I asked.

Breezebird nodded.

"I want you to tell me I am! I've bested both you and Jumpleg!" I meowed.

"Sunsting... We were only kits back then... I was-"

I unsheathed my claws and growled at her, "I said tell me I am the best!"

"Y-You're the best! The best warrior!" Her mew shook.

I sheathed my claws and smiled. "Thanks! You can go now!"

Breezebird scurried off with a look of fear in her eyes. I nearly burst out with laughter.

I truly am the best!

*

"Shredflash, we're getting closer!" Shred meowed to me as we

padded past the leafless and snow filled trees.

I sighed, "I know, Shred."

"Just letting you know!" he mewed back.

I'm happy that I'm having another litter. If I were to die, then my kits would carry on with ending the clans. Sometimes I still wonder why I didn't die when I got attacked by Mistfall and his clanmates.

Maybe because of Shred?

I looked at the eyeless tom. He had that smile on his face, as usual. The eye-holes dark as the night sky. I then looked ahead again as I slowly approached the Ocean Side.

Who would I be facing against this time? Would it be Mistfall? Fang? Featherstar? I padded closer to the snow covered sand. I soon padded onto the Ocean Side as I looked for the cat that was trying to harm my kin.

I saw them.

They were a black-furred cat.

Scarlet stained snow. I thought to myself as I padded towards them.

The cat padded towards me as well. Soon, we were at a short distance from each other, but I could see their face. He was a tom.

"Are you ready to end him, Shredflash?" Shred asked.

I am, Shred. I thought back to him.

Chapter 40

"So you're Shredflash?" Shadowblossom meowed to the grey-furred tom.

Shredflash nodded.

"I thought you would be more threatening, but to me, you are nothing but a killer and a rotten piece of fish," Shadowblossom growled at him.

"Who are you?" Shredflash asked.

"Why does it matter to you? I don't have to tell you anything, you killer." Shadowblossom unsheathed his claws and dug them into the snow, then soon into the sand.

"It's not like it truly matters. If you don't turn around right now, I'll end your life right here," Shredflash said.

"You killed my sister, and now I'm going to kill you."

"Your sister was weak. She had no chance against me." Shredflash mewed.

"My sister wasn't weak!" Shadowblossom jumped at Shredflash, but he dashed out of the way. "The only weak one here is you, Shredflash!" the Driftclan warrior meowed.

Shredflash shook his head. "I was questioning how powerful you are, but it seems like you are the weak one. I'm giving you one more chance to leave and not come back before you die at my paws." Shredflash said.

"Just shut up already!" Shadowblossom lunged at Shredflash and clawed at his muzzle.

Shredflash's eyes widened as he staggered backwards. Blood dripping from his muzzle and landing onto the snow. He looked

down at the snow and watched the scarlet substance stain the freezing snow.

"You think I'm done with you? I'm not done until you're on the ground and bleeding out," Shadowblossom growled at the grey-furred tom.

Shredflash stared at his blood, not looking up at Shadowblossom. Shredflash then mumbled something under his breath.

"What did you say, killer? I couldn't hear that," Shadowblossom mewed.

Shredflash slowly looked back up at Shadowblossom with an ominous look in his eyes. "I will stain the snow with your blood once I'm finished with you!" he hissed and ran towards the Driftclan cat.

"We'll see about that," Shadowblossom replied and ran towards Shredflash.

*

Rainpad padded into the Medicine den. He stopped in his tracks once he saw the golden-furred she-cat, Marigoldfur. Nova was sleeping in her nest next to her. Marigoldfur turned around and blushed once she saw Rainpad staring at her. "H-Hello..." she mewed.

"Hey," Rainpad meowed.

She slowly padded over to the white-furred tom as her fur felt hot. "Do you need something?" she asked.

Rainpad nodded.

"What do you need..?" Marigoldfur seemed confused.

"Come with me," Rainpad meowed and padded out of the Medicine den.

Marigoldfur quickly followed.

A few heartbeats later, Rainpad and Marigoldfur were out of camp. They were alone. "I need you." Rainpad meowed and padded close to Marigoldfur.

Marigoldfur blushed. "R-Rainpad... You know we can't be mates..." she meowed.

Rainpad licked her cheek. "We can, we just have to keep it secret." he replied, then licked her cheek again.

Marigoldfur thought for a moment. She knew how much Rainpad loves her, and she loves him just as much. "A-Are you sure, Rainpad?"

The white-furred tom nodded.

Marigoldfur then licked his cheek. "Okay... Then we'll be mates. I-I love you..." she meowed.

"I love you more." Rainpad mewed back and smiled at his mate.

*

Shredflash rammed himself into Shadowblossom, knocking him over, but Shadowblossom quickly hopped back onto his paws and lunged at Shredflash. The Driftclan warrior scratched his leg, causing it to bleed. Shadowblossom had tears welling up in his eyes. "I'll end you for killing Morningwaters!" he hissed as he lunged and pinned Shredflash, digging his claws into his shoulders.

Shredflash winced as he felt the tom's claws, blood spilling out onto the snow. The grey-furred tom watched as Shadowblossom lifted his paw. "Your killing stops here."

Shredflash then bites down onto Shadowblossom's leg, causing him to yowl in pain as blood leaked from it. Shredflash pushed Shadowblossom to the side and got up, panting as he watched the blood from the Driftclan cat's leg drip onto the snow.

"Keep going, Shredflash!" Shred meowed.

Shadowblossom slowly got up, but Shredflash scratched both sides

of Shadowblossom's muzzle and then dug his claws into the right side of the Driftclan warrior's body. The black-furred tom shrieked in pain as more of his blood stained the snow. "You're weak." Shredflash meowed and rammed himself into Shadowblossom, knocking him over.

"You put up a good fight, but it seems you did not get taught well enough." Shredflash meowed as he stood over Shadowblossom.

"This is the end for you." the grey-tom meowed as he lifted his paw.

*

Will I really go out like this? Getting killed by some rotten killer... I can't believe I lost... Shadowblossom thought and sighed. He watched as Shredflash lifted his paw over his head.

"Psst... Shadowblossom!" Shadowblossom looked towards the voice.

Morningwaters! I'm sorry... I've failed you.

"You haven't failed me! There's still a chance, Shadowblossom!" the starry-furred she-cat replied with a wide smile.

How?

"While he's lifting his paw, strike!" Morningwaters meowed.

Shadowblossom unsheathed his claws and swiped his paw, pushing his claws into the underside of Shredflash's leg. Shredflash hissed in pain as blood spilled onto the freezing snow, causing Shredflash to fall over on his side now. With the strength he had left, Shadowblossom brought himself to his paws. The Driftclan warriors hissed as he jumped on Shredflash and clawed at his body over and over. Shadowblossom then lodged both sets of his claws in the sides of Shredflash's neck. Blood spilled onto the snow, staining it. "I told you I wouldn't finish until you were on the ground and bleeding out." Shadowblossom meowed.

Shredflash coughed up blood, not moving.

Shadowblossom sheathed his claws and got off of the grey-furred

tom. He then covered Shredflash's body in snow. "Stay dead this time." Shadowblossom said.

The black-furred tom looked around before he slowly padded back towards his clan.

I'm going to sleep.

*

Shredflash watched as Shadowblossom padded away from him.

He was dying.

"S-Shredflash! Get up! You can't let the clans win!" Shred exclaimed.

He coughed out blood and sighed. "Maybe they will win, Shred."

"No! They can't!" Shred's voice deepened.

Shredflash slowly closed his eyes as snow drifted down from the sky and onto the Ocean Side.

Epilogue

Shredflash...

Shredflash.

Shredflash!

The grey tom's eyes shot open as he jolted awake. "Shred?" he questioned, then coughed, his voice hoarse.

Yep!

"Why can't I see you?" Shredflash asked. "And how am I even alive?"

Don't worry about those things right now... Let's just go home! You need some rest.

"Can't we go to Driftclan and get rid of that warrior that nearly killed me?" Shredflash coughed again.

Not right now. You're not in the best shape to be fighting right now! Now, come on. Let's get back to your mate! Shred said.

Shredflash nodded and heaved himself onto his paws, taking a few deep breaths in and then out as he padded back to the Galaxyclan camp.

Shredflash wouldn't allow himself to die just yet.

*

Shadowblossom padded back into Driftclan camp. He looked around until he spotted Addersky next to Ripplewave. He padded over to them. "Hey." he meowed, then smiled.

"Shadowblossom!" Addersky meowed and nuzzled her mate.

He winced as she did, the pain from his body catching up with him

now.

"Shadowblossom, what happened to you?!" Ripplewave meowed.

"I fought Shredflash."

Ripplewave then ran off to Featherstar's den.

*

Featherstar, Mistfall, Shadowblossom, and Sandcoat padded onto the Ocean Side.

"No..." Shadowblossom meowed. "No! I left him right here! I made sure he was dead! He didn't move!" he unsheathed his claws and clawed the snow.

"Calm down, Shadowblossom..." Mistfall meowed to his son.

"Don't tell me to calm down!" Shadowblossom shouted. "I left him to bleed out!"

Sandcoat looked at Featherstar. "What do we do, Featherstar?"

Featherstar looked back at her clanmate with a worried look.

"At the moment, Sandcoat... I don't know."

Trivia

Some things I feel need to get answered:

-Shadowblossom and Addersky had a litter of 3.

-Shred is the reason Shredflash is alive.

-Shredflash and Aurora had a litter of 1.

-Drizzlepaw becomes Drizzleflower.

-Yes, Shredflash is still alive.

A/N: Wow! This book took longer than Uprising and Retribution did combined! I started it back in August, but once I moved and school started up again, things got more busy and slow for me! I'm happy that I finished it, and before Christmas too! Thank you all so much for reading and staying with me throughout the Uprising Series! I truly appreciate it! And don't worry, there will be a fourth (and most likely last) book in the future!

Thank you all so so so so much for reading Warriors: Downfall!!! ❤️❤️❤️

If you have questions, just comment or DM me here or on Twitter!

Thank you all again! And have a merry Christmas and a happy new year! ❤️💞💞❤️❤️

-OKW

Book #4

The 4th book is now out!

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"We're still not done yet."

Warriors: Wounded Pride.